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SOUNDS MEGA

Musical Discourse in Black Majority Churches in London

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Thesis submitted to Birkbeck College for the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON

July 2018

DECLARATION

I thereby declare that the work presented in this thesis is my own and that upon which I expected to be examined for the degree of PhD.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores congregational singing through the lens of the local and global in Black Majority Churches (BMCs) in the Royal London Borough of Greenwich, UK. The phenomenal growth of modern-day Pentecostalism is its ability to negotiate the local and the global, and a number of scholars agree that up-tempo, lively music is integral to the Black religious experience. However, there is a paucity of literature in the UK that analyses this area in a detailed and systematic manner. Methodologically, Nattiez's model of musical discourse is employed within a framework of critical discourse analysis to interrogate his '*esthetic*', '*immanent*' and '*poietic*' elements, - that is the experience by the *receivers*, the *music* itself and the perspective of the *producers* - at New Wine Church, (NWC), Woolwich as the primary case study. The perspective of a multimodal analysis has uncovered multiple meaning-making processes within the context of a neo-Pentecostal megachurch with an emphasis on prosperity gospel. Firstly, the *esthetic* perspective found that the songs popular in the global Christian music industry fulfilled their role as Pentecostal liturgy, whilst simultaneously supporting and reinforcing the tenets of a prosperity gospel. Secondly, the *immanent* (musicological) analysis revealed simple, easy songs that had been altered through a process of African American 'Blackenizing'. Thirdly, the *poietic*, from the point of view of the producers, told the story of music in the church, signalling a shift in the musical identity. Further fieldwork confirmed the findings at NWC and similar processes in regard to an undermining and a silencing of African and Caribbean musical identities. The research concludes that the global Christian music industry and its supporting systems are not reflective of UK BMC congregations although these sounds dominated both the large and small churches in the research. These findings make problematic an understanding of the local and the global in congregational singing in BMCs and the privileging of white music forms with its concomitant economic benefits.

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DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to David, Shani, Rasheeda, my Dad, Reginald Page and in loving memory to my Mum, Phyllis Aveline Page (1935 – 1972)

GLOSSARY

A.A.	African American
A.T.R.	African Traditional Religion
B.M.C.	Black Majority Church
C.C.M.	Contemporary Christian Music
C.C.L.I.	Christian Copyright Licensing International
C.D.A.	Critical Discourse Analysis
C.F.T.	Christ Faith Tabernacle
C.W.M.	Contemporary Worship Music
F.G.B.F.	Full Gospel Businessmen Fellowship
K.I.C.C.	Kingsway International Christian Centre
L.C.G.C.	London Community Gospel Choir
N.T.C.G.	New Testament Church of God
N.W.C.	New Wine Church
R.C.C.G.	Redeemed Christian Church of God
S.D.A.	Seventh Day Adventist
W.L.	Worship Leader

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CD

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Music and congregational singing are germane to the liturgical¹ practices of Black British Pentecostals. In the globalised world of rapidly extending African Pentecostalism, congregational singing and musical practices present a unique opportunity to explore and deconstruct local and global religious identities in Black Majority Church (BMC) settings and problematise notions of reverse mission, on the one hand, and the inherent contradictions of a globalised commercial Christian music industry, on the other. However, despite this, there is a lacuna in regard to a detailed and systematic analysis of music in this environment. This thesis aims to address this gap.

In this chapter, I will discuss the contribution of my work to the existing literature on BMC Pentecostalism in the UK and the newly emerging field of congregational music. I will define the terminology of the key concepts that I will be working with and describe the outline of the thesis and show how I intend to carry out the research. Firstly, I will begin by chronicling a defining moment that acted as an inspiration for the study.

‘Tonight, we’re not going to have a concert, we gonna have church !!!’ -Andrae

Crouch² ‘Live in London’ album

February 5th 2004 – ‘Soul Deep’ The Jazz Café, Camden, London

¹ Alexander (1997) points out that Holiness Pentecostals would object to the use of the word ‘liturgy’ due to its associations with ‘dead formalism’ and the possibility of ‘quenching’ (this word is frequently used by Pentecostals in this context). While I agree with this assessment I have chosen to use the word here because it best describes the ritual activity I wish to describe.

² Andrae Crouch (1942-2015) known as the Godfather of gospel music, (Carpenter 2005:107) was an African-American gospel artist and pastor. He was famous for his fusion of popular styles with traditional gospel. Although critiqued for his ‘bland and superficial music’ (Broughton 1985:117) he regularly toured the UK and had an enormous impact on the Black British gospel scene.

The Jazz Café was packed to capacity. There was an equal mix of Black and white people, male and female, mostly aged under 40 in casual dress and women wearing jewellery. In contrast, I noticed at a small table in the corner, a group of Black church mothers sporting white broad brimmed hats and dressed in what appeared to be their Sunday best. Although totally incongruous in this raucous club atmosphere, they seemed completely relaxed and unperturbed by the smoke-filled environment and the numerous people imbibing alcohol. I saw large numbers of people and friends that I knew from the Black church circuit, but it was difficult to engage in conversation over the Alicia Keys track that was blasting out from the enormous speakers. I was relieved when Jenna Adae, the promoter, finally walked on the stage to open the concert slightly later than billed. She intoned: 'Welcome to the launch of Soul Deep...this has been 18 months of hard work. There has been a lot of prayer...this album is representative of our hearts and what we feel inside...it's been wonderful working with such wonderful musicians, especially Nicky Brown...you may not know all of the names on the bill tonight, but it's all about fresh talent.' When the music finally started it was definitely worth the wait. The quality of musicianship was unsurpassed. The mosaic of the harmonies, the thumping bass, the rich melodies assaulted my ear drums - it was a life enhancing moment. Different female bands and soloists romped through an assortment of musical renditions, carrying the audience with them to a place of transcendence. Slow ballads with soaring vocals, high energy upbeat numbers that had the crowd up and rocking and sophisticated Latin tracks engendering rapturous applause. In the slower numbers people had their hands raised in the air, eyes closed; seemingly lost in Praise and Worship to God. This was no doubt an unusual occurrence at the generally secular Jazz Cafe. Perhaps even more unusual was the move into the 'shout' at the end of Danniebelle Hall's 'I Go to the Rock'. People started jumping, moving, praising, as if in church to this familiar Black Pentecostal troupe. By the time Jocelyn Brown came to the stage screaming, 'we are taking it home with His eye is on the Sparrow', the whole crowd had been transported to

Sunday morning church rocking, clapping, singing, shouting repeatedly: 'I know He watches, I know He watches...' The Jazz Cafe had been transformed into a Black Church Pentecostal congregational worship experience. It was clear: this indeed was not a concert, we were having church.

The above ethnographic vignette³ recalls a Black British gospel concert that took place over a decade ago which forms the motivation for this thesis. As I recall this period, there are three points that I would like to consider.

Firstly, the concert was representative of a 'scene'. Soul Deep was one of thousands of concerts from choirs, groups and solo artists that had taken place over the years with members from UK BMCs, mainly from Pentecostal⁴ denominations. While it was an unusual concert insofar as, in a musical world dominated by patriarchy, the concept and the event was promoted by a woman launching an album written and performed by female artists. However, it was not unusual in that the style, sounds, lyrics, instrumentation, function, audience and location were entirely indicative of what Moberg refers to as a 'popular music scene' which is described as a

'...simultaneously musical, discursive, and aesthetic, temporal space that brings together people who share a passion for sensibility of or affinity with a given form of popular music.' (Moberg 2011a: 407).

This scene, that had attracted a sizeable multicultural audience began in the early 1960s⁵. It comprised a diversity of musical styles that resided in the discourse of Black gospel⁶ and was rooted in a Pentecostal worldview emanating from a desire for

³ The details of this concert were confirmed by Nicky Brown in an interview on 11th January 2017.

⁴ The Seventh Day Adventist church has also spawned a number of high profile musicians, but my focus in this thesis is on the Pentecostal denominations.

⁵ According to Broughton (1985: 135) the Langston Hughes play 'Black Nativity' in 1962 marked the beginning of public performance of gospel music to a mass audience in the UK

⁶ Gospel as a genre is a contested term; it carries multiple signifiers covering styles as diverse as southern,

evangelism and worship.

This scene was also emphatically rooted in the local. While acknowledging the contestations embedded in the concept of the 'local' (Back in Jenks 1998) and the routes and roots of cultural products, this scene, relying on the concept of Blackness as a unifying force, was firmly rooted in its distance from 'multi-directional, economic, social and cultural and political connections' (Barker 2004: 76) that define globalization. Although early gospel groups in the 70s and 80s were informed and influenced both by their Caribbean legacy, but mainly by their African American cousins for motivation and material (Fisher in Odeniran 2014: 17), the Soul Deep concert and others like it showed that the days of relying on African American covers seemed to be fast receding. Soul Deep demonstrated a lively, energetic enterprise to produce Black British Christian music in its own image. The Black British gospel scene, although small, struggling, and described as 'invisible' (Encinas 2011), appeared to be coming of age. Soul Deep represented the third generation of highly skilled Black professionals who were writing, producing and performing material borne out of their own lived experience and as such offered a fulcrum for a depository for a Black British Christian musical identity. The scene that the music existed in formed an alternative local space where identities could be resisted and performed. Notwithstanding the view of some Black religious leaders that this was a transgressive space, this scene created a site for youth rebellion without abandoning the core tenets of their faith. Young people could counter the holiness⁷ norms that their conservative religious environments held dear, while simultaneously appropriating aesthetic codes and modes from popular culture to perform their own unique brand of theology (Ingalls, Landau and Wagner 2013: 4).

country, bluegrass, 'negro' spirituals, contemporary, Praise and Worship, as well as indicating a performance style or simply songs with Christian lyrics. In this context, I am using it to refer to musical products emanating from the BMCs.

⁷ The Holiness tradition has roots in American Methodism and Wesleyanism and emphasises separation from 'worldly pleasures' (Kalilombe 1997).

Secondly, the product(s) emanating from this scene was born and nurtured in the soil of BMCs. As noted above, there was not a singular cultural product. The diversity of musical styles and genres, including traditional Black gospel choirs, country and western, RnB, jazz funk and reggae groups held in common their genesis in BMCs. And BMCs although diverse, held in common their emergence in response to social and racial inequalities. The Soul Deep concert was representative of the BMCs' ability to conceive of and develop this important cultural artefact that was Black, British and Christian. All musicians and singers involved in the Soul Deep concert had learnt their craft in BMC churches. The emphasis on ecstatic worship provided a unique environment of 'community music'⁸ where most served faithfully Sunday by Sunday, and mid-week, leading worship or performing in their local congregations. Musicians and singers often started learning their instruments or singing publicly at a young age. Churches made available access to resources: they provided a learning environment, space for rehearsal as well as numerous and varied graduated opportunities for performance,⁹ forming an alternative means of informal¹⁰ musical education in a period in the 80s of depleting music education (Robinson 1982). As a consequence, practitioners developed highly honed technical skills and extraordinary oral abilities. Some of the best singers and musicians in the UK are found in these environments. Although largely self-taught, for the ambitious and eager,

⁸ The term 'Community music' is somewhat dated now and rarely used, but defines a particular approach to music making, based in an informal setting, unfettered by the constraints of an imposed curriculum providing an opportunity to the participants to foster and develop their own creativity.

⁹ A musician performing in a BMC can begin by playing in a small midweek prayer meeting, progressing to playing at a national convention of up to 3,000 – 4,000 people.

¹⁰ Informal learning occurs in a wide range of non-formal settings, including almost everything that is not an established educational environment and may range from a local community centre to a teenager's bedroom. Green (2002) describes it as 'learning through interaction with 'peers, other musicians or family members. This compares with Sloboda and Davidson in Deliege and Sloboda (1996) who describe the process as engaging in tasks that have not been specified by a teacher. However, in some informal settings the notion of a 'teacher' as the ultimate authority and communicator of knowledge may not be as clearly defined as it is within the classical setting, indeed many musicians within this environment are self-taught. Cain in Philpott and Plummeridge (2001) discusses his own musical learning as a folk musician where the craft is learnt via the oral tradition. The teacher in this environment may be a family member and much of the learning takes place by listening to recordings and imitating what was heard. Finnegan (1989) and Green (2002) describes a similar process for rock and pop musicians. The term 'informal' may appear to indicate that learning in this sector is less serious and not as thorough as the formal. However, the research seems to suggest the converse. Finnegan (1989) and Green (2002) describes the rigorous and lengthy processes undertaken by rock and pop musicians to acquire musical skills. This is similar to the learning that takes place in BMC environments.

young, typically male musician and female singer, the church enabled a very privileged access to music making in some cases leading to established employment in the secular music industry.¹¹ Since the early 80s, singers and musicians from BMC environments have been in high demand in secular circles for their skill and technical proficiency.¹² This is not due to any stereotypical essentialist equation of so-called 'natural musicality' and Blackness, but due to the experience of learning and playing in the demanding Praise and Worship environment of a BMC which dictates that musicians and singers are flexible, adaptable and can respond quickly to the sensitive exigencies of a pneumatological Pentecostal moment. Performers in Black churches need to sense the emotional and spiritual temperature of a service and demonstrate that they can work in accordance with the 'leading of the spirit'. This demonstrates the potential offered by BMCs to nurture and develop a cultural product. Mindful of charges of musical essentialism¹³ and eschewing arguments about what is 'Black music' my suggestion is not that this music can only be owned and controlled by BMCs, or that its location resides within a single ethnic community. Indeed, many of the choirs included people from other racial groups. My assertion, rather, is that it is nurtured and maintained by producers, participants and consumers within BMC environments and as such it is a product of BMCs, embodying what Dyson refers to as 'persistent features of Black life' (Dyson 2004:

¹¹ During the summer of 2004, I conducted informal research with six professional musicians attending BMC churches. They were selected on the basis of their membership to a BMC and adherence to the doctrines of faith and their status as professional musicians playing with reasonably well-established pop artists. All of the musicians were either currently at the time of interview or formerly, members of the New Testament Church of God (NTCG) at branches in London, the North and the Midlands. Two of the musicians had shifted allegiance from NTCG and moved on to other BMC churches. Nonetheless their formative musical and spiritual experiences had taken place under the auspices of NTCG. They were all regular church attenders and identified themselves as deeply committed to the doctrine of the BMC by the evidence of water baptism and speaking in tongues. Another example of this was the producer, performer, music pastor at Ruach Nicky Brown mentioned in the Soul Deep concert, one of the UK's most accomplished gospel musicians. Nicky Brown was also one of the respondents in this project.

¹² The BMC musicians that I interviewed had worked with a range of high profile popular artists including Mica Paris, Charlotte Church, George Benson, Primal Scream, Kylie Minogue to name a few.

¹³ Frith in Hall (1996: 108-109) critiques a musical essentialism that argues for a homology between certain cultures owning and controlling certain sounds. He states that it is easy to assert that art interprets cultures, but less easy to say why a certain sound is aligned to a culture. He concludes that after art has been made, it has a life of its own, and the maker has no claim on it. Gilroy (1993: 99-103) on the other hand argues for anti-anti essentialist stance that distinguishes the differences and similarities in Black culture but relies on a concept of diaspora as a unifying force.

87).

Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly for this thesis concerts like Soul Deep, dramatized the role of music as a border crossing device. The notion of border crossing is a useful theoretical concept to think about the movement of music through physical and metaphysical space. The idea of crossing borders was adopted by Chicana feminist writer, Anzaldua (1987) to critique divisions that exist as a result of imperialism, race, gender and sexuality. While the focus of her text is about the discrimination faced by Chicanos, women and lesbians, the concept nonetheless can be applied here because it explicates the physical nature of borders as well as the 'arbitrary dividing lines that are simultaneously social, cultural and psychic' (Brah 1996: 194). I have utilised the concept to elucidate the role played by music emanating from the BMCs in this period. This cultural product and scene crossed the physical border of sacred and secular space. As well as performances in churches, many groups, choirs and artists performed in clubs, town halls, community centres, prisons, hospitals, Christian and non-Christian festivals such as Greenbelt,¹⁴ Glastonbury and Edinburgh amongst others, in addition to numerous radio and TV shows, hence giving a public face to BMCs. This enabled a mixing of audiences and the crossing of racial, class and religious borders. The church mothers, (who I later found out were grandmothers of some of the performers) were free to enter a space, which they would normally perceive as 'off limits'. This also worked in the opposite direction where young, white hipsters were free to access the ritual practice of the Black Pentecostals. Additionally, the music crossed denominational borders. The scene provided both a social, spiritual and creative space where young people from different denominations could form alliances (Smith 2009: 71, Beckford 2014: 20) and work together¹⁵ at a time when many BMCs were separated by doctrinal (Smith 2009: 125) and

¹⁴ Doug Wallace (Smith 2009) recalls the Harmonisers as the first Black British gospel band to play at the Christian festival Greenbelt in 1979, noting that it was a rare occurrence for Black and white Christian artists to share stages at the time.

¹⁵ Basil Meade founded the award-winning London Community Gospel Choir (LCGC), along with Lawrence Johnson, Music Minister for NWC. LCGC are arguably, the most famous UK Black choir, attracting young

ethnic differences.¹⁶

Furthermore, the music crossed ideological borders by using what was perceived by BMC religious authorities as inappropriate musical styles such as reggae and RnB as well as popular instrumentation.¹⁷ Caribbean elders strongly disapproved of 'worldly music' due to its association with a sinful life before Christ (Smith 2009: 22). In some cases, concerts were banned (Meade 2011: 103), leaders forbade young people from attending gigs, and pastors prayed for groups to be converted (Odeniran 2014: 36). Many of the groups and choirs came into conflict with their church leadership but persisted in their desire to use popular music for the purposes of evangelism, worship and aesthetic engagement. These ideological borders were transgressed by these young people who refused to abide by the rules of the gatekeepers and stepped outside of the safe conclave of their churches.

Finally, the music crossed borders by the development of an industry both within the confines of the BMC, but also penetrating the secular marketplace problematising for some the commodification of the sacred. By the mid-80s, this cottage industry had a flourishing infrastructure of superstar artists, record labels, promoters, production companies, T.V. and radio shows, a viable circuit, and a faithful coterie of fans. Artists like Lavine Hudson¹⁸ and Paul Johnson¹⁹ secured recording contracts with secular record

people from a variety of BMCs.

¹⁶ Nicky Brown (2016) points out that many Caribbean BMCs are segregated according to different islands. For example, New Testament Church of God, (NTCG) is, attended mostly by Jamaicans, and people from Barbados generally attend Shiloh.

¹⁷ Some Holiness churches still do not allow the use of band instruments Odeniran (2014: 16).

¹⁸ Lavine Hudson was one of the first solo gospel artists to be signed to Virgin Records. She released two albums: *Intervention* in 1988 and *Between Two Worlds* in 1991 (Smith 2009: 140).

¹⁹ Paul Johnson was the lead singer of Paradise, a popular jazz funk Christian group that entered the church circuit in the early 1980s. The mix of reggae, rock and funk caused consternation amongst many church leaders who discouraged young people from attending their concerts. After signing to Christian label Pilgrim Records in 1982 they attracted secular interest and secured a deal for the mainstream market with Priority Record/ Bullet Management in 1983 for their album 'World's Midnight'. (Broughton 1985: 144, Smith 2009: 165, Odeniran 2014: 39). The single 'One Mind Two Hearts', went to number 1 in the club charts, and number 42 in the UK national charts.

companies proving that this music could compete on its own terms in the mainstream. These activities dramatized the porosity of the borders enabling a merging of ministry and mammon.

Black British gospel music and the scene that it represented as a cultural product and practice is arguably the most significant cultural artefact to emerge from BMCs. While this struggling industry have proven not to be economically sustainable (Encinas 2011) this cultural product birthed from diaspora has imbibed many of the troupes of the church and has for a small minority, provided an economic base. But, perhaps more importantly this product has radically demonstrated the wealth of talent and creativity embodied in BMCs. This radical, border crossing, cultural product epitomized the religious yearnings and expectations in music of mainly Caribbean Christians and made manifest the struggles, joys and the changing face of UK BMCs. Crossing borders requires courage, it may result in casualties, even fatalities, but it also contains the potential of creating new possibilities and futures. Popular Black gospel singer Andrae Crouch quoted at the start of this chapter posed a dichotomy between the concert hall and the church, inferring an oppositional stand-off between the two spaces. The concept of border crossing understands a fusing of different world views in a scene where it is possible 'to have church' which in Black Pentecostal church parlance is to sing praises to God, to speak in tongues, to dance, to shout, to celebrate a religious and ethnic identity in an environment dedicated to 'economic and promotional importance' (Shuker 1998: 60).

Motivation for the Study

It is this concert and many others like it that formed the motivation for my study. Growing up as a Black Pentecostal in the UK I attended many concerts of this type. As a young Christian, passionate about popular music, these concerts formed an important

placeholder for me to locate the complex and sometimes competing aspects of my religious, racial, social and musical identities. While an emphasis on a racialized or political Black identity was not central to the agenda of most BMCs, participation in the scene enabled a psychological sense of well-being that countered the social marginalisation I experienced in society as a Black woman. It allowed me to simultaneously reject and affirm troupes and practices of BMCs whilst giving me sonic borders of belonging.

Moberg's (2011a) concept of the 'scene' is helpful in understanding the connections between the industry and the congregation. A term such as subculture denoting resistance to the mainstream (Hall & Jefferson 1975) or a specific taste culture (Thornton 1995), are terms that could be applied to this environment. However, these limit the discussion to a bounded group. 'Scene' embraces the idea of border crossing and is less constraining in widening the discourse to understand the connectedness and disconnectedness between congregational singing and music and extends it even further to embrace the commercial realities of a globalised music industry. My participation in the scene helped me to understand the importance of the Black British gospel industry to BMC congregations for the performance of racial and religious identities. As noted by Hesmondhalgh (2013), music matters because it has the capacity to hold in tension both collective and personal meanings, and therefore the private and the public experience. So, while much of the music that was performed in this scene was performance based and inappropriate for congregational singing, the scene contained all of the elements necessary to service the aesthetic needs of the growing church. The musicians and songwriters nurtured by the scene had the raw ingredients necessary to facilitate this process; and while at the time BMCs were not utilising new material from the scene, I wanted to explore whether this had taken place over time. However, I was equally aware of an epistemological deficit and a paucity of literature and was keen to access the legacy

of this scene on modern BMCs. And, furthermore, to ascertain the extent to which the concepts of the locality of the cultural production and the border crossing dynamic that I had observed in the Black gospel scene were relevant to congregational singing in BMCs today. Additionally, my personal experience and insider knowledge placed me in a unique position to inform and influence a study of this nature.

Purpose of Study

The focus of this empirical study is to conduct an analysis of the function and character of congregational singing as a signifying practice of African and Caribbean churches in London with a specific focus on a newly established West African Pentecostal church in Woolwich, New Wine Church (NWC). Firstly, I conducted an in-depth analysis of the musical discourse of the congregational singing in a single service and related this to data collected over the duration of the research. Secondly, I explored the story of the church's music through its receivers and producers against the backdrop of a globalized Christian music industry and an operationalization of prosperity gospel. And finally, I supplemented the discussion with additional data from another three churches in Woolwich, namely Anchor, Chrisma and Christ Faith Tabernacle, where I isolated a single element of the musical discourse as a means of testing the findings from NWC.

The background to this study is the explosion of Pentecostalism(s) globally (Gifford 1998, Asamoah-Gyadu 2005b, Kalu 2008, Ugba 2009, Stewart 2012, Adogame 2008, 2013, 2014), increased migration and notions of reverse mission alongside rapidly growing African Pentecostal mega-churches in the UK (Olofinjana 2010, Adedibu 2012). The success of Pentecostalism is often attributed to its ability to successfully negotiate the global and the local (Adogame 2002, 2013: x, Robert 2000:56). I am mindful of the

elasticity and slippages in how the terms global and local have been theorised and deployed. The understanding of the global here is one that recognizes Pentecostalism's ambitious propensity to assert an international reach transcending language, denominational, and class boundaries, utilising modern media technologies to advance their message. The local is more modest in its ambition, reflecting and being reflective of those forms, practices, cultural products related to churches' home of origin. I was keen to assess how ideas of the global and the local were exemplified or denied by congregational singing and what this might mean for religious and ethnic identities.

Historically, BMC environments are uncritically aligned to high energy and ecstatic oral cultures (Cone 1972, Costen 1993, Rommen 2007). Poloma points out that in the highly charged emotional spaces that often typify Pentecostal services,

‘music serves as a facilitator of mystical experience as it offers experience-evoking sounds wed to accepted metaphors and myths’ (Poloma 2003: 33).

The use of popular music, although sometimes contested, is often taken as given in these settings. However, these ‘experience evoking sounds’ according to Poloma are rarely questioned or interrogated in scholarly work for their aesthetic, social, cultural or economic implications. The use of music gives rise to many different questions such as: What music is used in these environments and why? How are these meanings communicated? Do these meanings have implications for social and political concerns beyond the immediate environment? Are there contradictory elements contained within these meanings? How are religious messages encoded and enacted in the musical discourse? This thesis argues that UK BMC environs, with its largely untapped cultural production, provide a rich resource where a range of signifying practices can be observed and assessed.

Research Questions

In this study, I aim to:

- To establish orality and aurality as a fundamental component of UK Pentecostalism which hitherto has been lacking in systematic academic interrogation.
- To explore the musical discourse that is mediated within the congregation by undertaking an analysis of the musicological materials, visual representations, and interactions with music.
- To interrogate the visual study of Pentecostalism and introduce multimodal analysis as a new method to the field.
- To ascertain to what extent Christian groups originating from Africa relate their Africanness to a new cultural context.
- To assess the influence of commercial Christian music on the repertoire sung and produced in BMC environments.
- To understand how concepts of the local and global are reinforced and contested in congregational singing.

Rationale for the Choice of Church

The primary case study is based at New Wine Church (NWC) in Woolwich. NWC provides an excellent site for the fieldwork for three key reasons. The location in the Royal London Borough of Greenwich where Woolwich is situated is an example of an area that has experienced significant expansion in its African population over the last 10 years. The church also fits the typography of an African Pentecostal mega-church that has seen substantial growth since the turn of the century. NWC is a prime example of a brand new confident and assertive African Pentecostal Church - custodian of considerable capital, property, local power and increasing population. It is well

established as a mega-church, with substantial resource, time and attention paid to maintaining a musical output for the purposes of worship. It is one of the few churches in the London area that employ a paid full time Minister of Music. The attribute of having 'good music' is important for a church such as this. An analysis of their congregational music sets out a critical and analytical framework in which to deconstruct and understand the musical discourse.

Use of Terms

Black Majority Church

I have chosen to use the term 'Black Majority Church' (BMC) in this study. Although this term and other race infused terms such as 'Black', 'Black-led', 'West Indian' have been contested and hotly debated by academics and church leaders (Kalilombe 1997: 306, Trotman in Edwards 1990: 12- 35, Sturge 2005: xiii; and Aldred & Ogbo 2010: 1), these debates epitomize some of the religious and political struggles that the church has in reference to racial identity, changing social awareness and sensitivities regarding the use of language in a multicultural society. These ideas appear to militate against the church's *raison d'être* to evangelise the world. In the next section, I will summarise aspects of the debate to justify my use of the term.

Gerloff (1992) in one of the early PhDs about varieties of Caribbean and African congregations was among the first to append the notion of race theory in her description of the church by use of the term 'Black-led' in her exhaustive account of the emerging congregations developing across the UK. This was an improvement on the pejorative appellation of 'sect' previously used by Calley (1965), Hill (1963) and Hill cited in Hill and Martin (1970). Gerloff (1992) acknowledged that the term 'Black-led' may be viewed by

some as 'politically emotive' with 'racial overtones' (Gerloff 1992: 25) and indeed, some Black ministers confirmed that they found the term to be highly offensive. Ramsay opined that the designation was 'degrading and lacking in respect' (Trotman in Edwards 1992: 26). Highly critical of the race construction he suggested that this framing relegated the faith to a second-class status, maintaining that the term 'Black church' was one imposed by researchers seeking to describe and understand the category. While conceding that it may be appropriate as a description of pigmentation, he viewed this sociological and biological reductionism as contrary to the Christian mandate seeking to welcome all races. He proposed the term 'Holiness Church' or 'Holiness Pentecostal' in an effort to emphasize the theological distinctives of the faith rather than the racial dimensions of its adherents. Sturge (2005: 29), on the other hand, acknowledged the difficulties inherent in the racialized appendage, but argued for the distinctive characteristics of Black Christians in the UK, concluding that the term Black Majority had become 'standard nomenclature' and appropriately described the multi-denominational Christian tradition established by people from the Caribbean and Africa.

I would agree that the race appropriation can be problematic because it appears to single out one discursive category symbolic of racial and political struggles. Furthermore, on a practical level there are limitations to these race infused terms, insofar as some churches described as Black-led are led by non-Black people. There are 'mainstream' Anglican or Catholic churches in metropolitan areas which could accurately be described as Black majority due to the ethnicity of the congregation and the racial identity of the minister. However, due to the white hierarchy of leadership, usage here would be incorrect. Indeed, many churches that identify as Black-led are historically and administratively tied to white parent churches in the American south, (such as the NTCG).²⁰ There is often an

²⁰ Muir's (2003) PhD using Cone's framework of Black Theology, explores racial struggles in the New Testament Church of God.

assumption that all BMCs are Pentecostal, however churches such as Bibleway and Wesleyan Holiness although engaging in Pentecostal type worship are more closely aligned to a Methodist doctrinal position (Trotman in Edwards 1996: 27). Clearly, the term does not allow for the diversity and distinctive features of the panoply of Black Christian belief that are contained within its remit.

However, despite these arguments I have adopted a strategic essentialist stance and have chosen to use the term BMC for political and practical purposes. Politically, use of the term locates churches in a social and historical context. And as will be discussed in the following chapter, one of the reasons that churches falling into this category emerged was partly as a result of rejection and marginalization from the white host UK Christian community. Whilst acknowledging, that BMCs are not homogenous, neither do they reside within a singular denominational context, the social and political experience of racialization for Caribbean and African migrants was a common denominator.

Practically, use of the term as a collective category acts as a political shorthand and establishes a commonality in approaches to worship. Regardless of denominational affiliation, BMCs are often characterised by their use of lively, up-tempo sounds. While I recognise the diversity and difference that reside within BMCs, use of the term allows me to privilege a particular social history and aesthetic practice.

African Pentecostal

In a similar manner, I have chosen to define NWC as an African Pentecostal church. While the nomenclature of “Pentecostal” would be acceptable given the emphasis on the baptism of the Holy Spirit evidenced by the ability to speak with other tongues as indicated in their statement of faith (<http://www.newwine.co.uk/church/our-statement-of-faith>)

[faith](#)), the use of this term also maintains a continuity with a mainstream Christian tradition. The designation of 'African' on the other hand may be viewed as problematic to the leadership and some members of the church. Ter Haar (1998) confirmed this in her research on African Christians in the Netherlands stating that groups generally identify themselves first and foremost as Christians and only secondly as Africans (Ter Haar 1998: 84) preferring an international and aspirational emphasis over a singular ethnic identification. As with the term BMC, many African leaders refute the ethnic and political classification of the church. I also observed this in NWC in a sermon on 7th August 2011 on the structure and strategy of the church, Pastor Tayo²¹ articulated the church's vision as a global one – both in its outreach to the international community and by using every media such as TV, radio and internet at its disposal. Furthermore, regarding self-identification, he stated emphatically:

'Regardless of how it may appear in the natural, we are not a Nigerian church, an African church or even a Black church. We are called to be, a church for all nations and the culture of this church must represent the plethora of cultures represented in this nation and must be conducive for everyone to fit in.
http://www.newwine.co.uk/training_weekly-devotional.asp?id=68

Pastor Tayo here was clearly repudiating any ethnic, national or political articulation, preferring to append a religious identification. Despite this, I will continue to highlight the ethnicity of the church as an African Pentecostal for three key reasons. Firstly, within the UK context, this designation broadly describes the majority ethnic origin of the leadership and the membership, therefore making a differentiation between a non-African church. Secondly, this locates the church in a geo-socio framework which is relevant to the meaning-making processes communicated through the music that I will be analysing. And finally, I am locating the work alongside a growing corpus of literature that use this term.

In this thesis, I will use the term BMC as a collective term to describe churches (outside the mainline branches) that have a congregation which is majority African and or

²¹ Pastor Tayo Adeyemi was the presiding minister of NWC at the time.

Caribbean. African Pentecostalism in the UK is a subset of this framework and has different historical roots and routes and varying theological stances, but this term will be used when referring to this particular subset. As noted, it would be incorrect to suggest that this labelling is indicative of the motivation or deliberate strategy of either grouping. Indeed, Pentecostal churches are proselytizers in orientation and take seriously the 'great commission' to evangelize the world. They also pride themselves on their ability to 'welcome all people', and most will have a section of the service devoted to this task. African people are in Caribbean churches and vice versa. Nonetheless, the categorization provides a means of denoting and understanding the different groups.

Contribution to the Literature

Black Majority Church

This use of terms also delineates one of the two fields that this thesis contributes to. The work is multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary insofar as I have drawn on many academic frameworks and integrated knowledge and methodological approaches from different disciplines. However, I see the study as making a major contribution to the broad field of UK BMCs as described above and more generally to the global impact of African Christianity. This work divides into two key strands. Firstly, the work of Hill (1963), Calley (1965), Arnold (1992), Edwards (1992), Gerloff (1992), Beckford (1998, 1999, 2000), Muir (2003), Aldred (2005), Sturge (2005), and others relates largely to the Caribbean, post-Windrush²² immigrants who formed churches mostly under US administrative systems. More recently scholars (Hunt 2001, Osgood 2006, Burgess 2009, Adedibu 2012) have explored the rise of African Christianity within the UK. These texts which will be discussed in Chapter Two, provide an important analysis of BMCs highlighting their history, social

²² In June 1948, the Empire Windrush docked in the UK with the first large group of Caribbean immigrants. The Windrush has become the symbol of post war immigration (Dabydeen et. al. 2007: 155).

context and theological contribution. They also point out the sociological and political imperatives of the BMCs in the UK context. There are a number of academic interrogations of these groups regarding areas such as spiritual and civic engagement, (Burgess 2009); the use of faith and faith networks to optimize entrepreneurial endeavours (Nwankwo & Gbadamosi 2013, Ojo 2015); the ability to use faith as a resource to assist with migratory processes (Adogame & Spickard 2010); critiques of prosperity gospel (Sturge 2005, Olofinjani in Adogame 2014) amongst other areas. This literature is important in establishing the intersections and extension of theological and sociological frameworks of these newly evolving churches and provides a rigorous contextual framework in which to frame some of the debates under discussion. Indeed, as noted by Adedibu (2012: 153) African and Caribbean theologies are experiential, oral and narrative. Nonetheless, a gap exists in the literature insofar as there is little analysis about what African Pentecostalism in the UK, or indeed globally sounds like. Furthermore, there is little that systematically tracks the histories, developments and debates regarding congregational singing and music within UK BMCs. Scholars critiquing the role and function of UK BMCs highlight the embeddedness of music to Pentecostal liturgy, however there are few scholars that give the topic of the oral a singular and systematic focus. Their analysis does not focus on the songs that are being sung and the wider implications of these songs. Furthermore, they take as normative the view that the worship arena is uncontested and apolitical. Indeed, apart from Beckford (1998) and Edwards (1992) there are few voices that attempt to counter this dominant narrative and seek to explore the gaps and the silences in the musical discourse or reflect on possible sites of dissension.

It is my contention that an analysis that takes as salient the centrality of the music enriches and deepens our understanding of the Pentecostal experience and uncovers contestations and contradictions that may not be visible elsewhere. Therefore, my aim in

this thesis is to further engage with and extend these debates by analysing the congregational songs of four inner London BMCs within the context of a multimodal semiotic analysis to identify whether elements of encoding, celebrating and perhaps contesting Black religious life are inherent within the musical discourse.

Congregational Music

The second field of literature that my work engages with and contributes to is that of congregational music. This is an emerging and distinct area of scholarship with roots in ethnomusicology.²³ While the study of church music has been a perennial feature in musicology, the hegemony of the high art tradition has undermined and marginalized the voice of the people. Porter (2014) describes it as:

‘The interest provided by elaborate musics has meant that everyday realities have often been neglected and congregational music pushed to the sides.’ (Porter 2014: 151)

The everyday realities to which Porter refers are often encoded in popular music; and while this term is imprecise and ‘riddled with complexities’ (Middleton 1990: 3), the popular in music is often realised in opposition to elitist or traditional culture and in alliance with a commercial orientation. The field of congregational music takes popular music as normative and recent publications such as Evans (2006), Johnson (2008) & (2011), Ingalls (2008), Nekola (2016), Pollard (2008) and edited texts such as Ingalls, Landau and Wagner (2013), Ingalls and Yong (2015), Wagner (2014) tell us something about the divergent and sometimes dissonant perspectives on 20th and 21st century Praise and Worship music in local and translocal settings. Following a few Christian Congregational Music²⁴ conferences in the UK this burgeoning field is a fertile meeting

²³ Porter (2014) suggests that due to the emphasis on the ‘other’, ethnomusicology has given little attention to music at home, resulting in a lack of attention to congregational music.

²⁴ The first Christian Congregation Music: Local and Global Perspectives conference was convened at Ripon College Cuddesdon, Oxford in 2011, and since then has been held biennially.

ground to examine these areas and the collisions and collaborations between popular music, identity and evangelical Christianity.

This newly developing field is an appropriate location for my work. While it is not theology per se, it takes as normative Christian belief systems cognizance of the theological significance of worship but interrogates the musicological and sociological impact of worship music. Central to much of this work are concepts such as identity, notions of the local and global, mass mediation and standardisation. These are some of the themes that permeate my work. To date, nonetheless, the above literature has omitted research from a UK BMC perspective. Dixon-McKenzie's (2014) work in cataloguing the customs and practices of post-war Caribbean migrants does not engage with literature from this field. I am, therefore, in a unique position to add to this sphere of interest.

Praise and Worship

The overarching area of investigation is congregational singing and music. However, there are a number of other terms, often interchangeably used to describe the specific area of praxis to which this thesis refers. They are, inter alia, Praise and Worship, contemporary worship music (CWM), evangelical and Pentecostal worship, even 'modern hymns' (Evans 2006). These terms reference a seismic evolution that has taken place in congregational music globally. The different iterations of the terms point to slightly different trajectories but broadly mark a shift to popular sounds and instrumentation in church music since the 1960s. These terms are often understood in opposition to traditional worship and point to a 'tension' (Johnson 2015: 117), or even a 'rupture' (Klaver 2015: 98). In this thesis, I will use the term Praise and Worship music. There are several reasons for this. Johnson's straightforward definition of CWM as 'evangelical congregational song written between 1960s – to late 2000s in western popular styles' with

its emphasis on the geographical location, point to some of the exclusive tendency embedded in the musical discourse that this thesis is seeking to engage with. This will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter Two. A further reason for my usage of the term is that although the term contemporary worship music is one used by a number of academics, 'Praise and Worship' is the term that is understood and used by the respondents in my thesis and in the churches where my fieldwork took place.

Worship comprises of a number of components of which Praise and Worship is only one part. The term is also both noun and verb. Praise and Worship describes a genre of music generally typified by soft rock and the use of popular instrumentation. The term is used by music industry insiders as a marketing category and understood by consumers. Furthermore, Praise and Worship is also the activity, and describes the period at the beginning of a service where a Praise and Worship team, led by a leader, will lead the congregation in a set of worship songs for about 30 - 40 minutes. In this thesis, I am not dismissive of the ritual role that Praise and Worship fulfils in a church service, nor do I wish to undermine its spiritual significance in the life of Christian believers. As stated by Forrester:

'Christian worship is often, and properly, seen as the definitive and central activity of the people of God' (Forrester 2009: 3).

As a Christian believer for many years, I am aware of the critical role that Praise and Worship plays in both the life of Christians and the work of the church, and I am sensitive to the disquiet some may feel in placing this area under a critical spotlight. However, I am equally keen to unleash it from its spiritual and theological moorings in order to analytically explore the musical, cultural and socio-economic base within which the genre is embedded. I believe that such an enterprise will generate important insights that would provide a clearer understanding of the nature of congregational music in UK BMCs.

Music Discourse Nattiez's Model

The key aim of this project is to analyse congregational music and singing in BMCs. I am working with an understanding of culture where culture is regarded as constitutive of and not merely reflective of social worlds. Access to social worlds provides an insight to values, meanings, assumptions, religious beliefs and worldviews that also have material and economic consequences. I am operating from the premise that music is affective and invested with enormous power and congregational singing as a semiotic practice is a site where multiple meanings can be found. To capture these domains, I have adopted the position of music as discourse. Previous studies (discussed in Chapter Two) on BMC congregational singing are limited and methodological approaches have failed to take account of all the elements of the musical text and praxis. In this project, I have been influenced by an approach to musical semiology that is partly informed by musicologist Nattiez (1990). According to Nattiez the musical work is:

‘...constituted by procedures that have engendered it, acts of composition and the procedures to which it gives rise: acts of interpretation and perception’ (Nattiez 1990: ix).

Conceding little agreement on what constitutes a musical semiology and pointing to the many schools of thought operating under the umbrella of semiology or semiotics, he prefers to speak of multiple *semiologies* and projects in musical semiology. Accepting that the task of musical semiology is to study the signs in music, wrestling with the conundrum of what constitutes a musical sign, and even disregarding the possibility of meaning in music, Nattiez (1990) nonetheless helpfully proposes a tripartite approach in trying to understand how a work of art functions by using three elements to define a ‘total musical fact’. Following Pierce’s triadic analysis of the sign, rather than Saussure’s binary approach, his musical semiology identifies the following elements as pivotal:

- 1) Esthetic – reconstructs the message(s) and ascertains the reconstruction and experience of the form by receivers.

2) Poietic – the symbolic form, as it appears from the producers.

3) Immanent or neutral – the trace, the physical, material – the sound/image, the trace accessible to our five senses (Nattiez 1990).

These three areas define the totality of the musical discourse and provide a thorough analysis through differing perspectives.

Keefer (1983) argues that the difference between the esthetic and poietic areas in Nattiez's work are not explicit, and they are indeed open to a number of different interpretations. I have, therefore, applied the following definitions for the purposes of this project. The esthetic is how the music is experienced by its receivers. In Chapter Six, I have interpreted receivers in this context as the members of the congregation engaged in the activity of Praise and Worship and have analysed this by my own participation and the participation of others involved in the Praise and Worship session. Evans (2006) argues that this is a difficult parameter to judge given the multiplicity of views and opinion that can emerge. In the same chapter, I have further explored the esthetic level using the Christian Copyright Licensing International (CCLI) database. The system of CCLI will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Five. This framework is the pop charts for the global Christian music industry and communicates how the music is viewed by multiple audiences. Evans states that these types of charts are a 'conveniently attainable method to glean insights' (Evans 2006: 113) into this level of operation. Chapter Six assesses the immanent elements, i.e., the music itself. Here I have isolated the sounds of the music, that is melody, harmony, timbre, lyrics using the language of musicology. This performative element is important in understanding the music as music and avoids the reductionism of purely assigning sociological or theological roles to the music. In Chapter Seven I explore the poietic level by using semi-structured interviews with the Praise and Worship team in the church in order to understand their perspective on the codes and the modes of the music. In this context, the Praise and Worship team are both producers and

receivers. They are the carriers of the music, but they are also members of the congregation. This perspective is important to understand the meanings that are brought to bear on the music; it also enables the story of music in the church to be told. Finally, in Chapter Eight, I return to the esthetic and poietic parameters, this time from another three BMCs in the borough in order to compare and contrast the findings from the primary case study. Nattiez's (1990) model with these adaptations enables a contextualised musicological analysis giving rise to the recognition of music as a discourse.

Multimodal Analysis

Another approach that I have taken in the thesis is to discuss the music alongside an analysis of the visual. Inspired by previous work on Pentecostalism (Meyer 2004, Asamoah-Gyadu 2007, Hackett 2003, de Witte 2009) that have discussed the entity from a purely visual perspective, I argue that orality is a *sine qua non* of Pentecostalism; and to fail to take account of this essential aspect leads to a partial analysis. Communication is multimodal (Kress and van Leeuwen 1996, 2001) and in order to appreciate how musical meanings are communicated, we need to take account of the visual arrangements as well as an exploration of the total music fact to understand the polysemic nature of the discourse.

My intention is to place the sounds that I will hear into a wider geographic and environmental setting to better understand their impacts. Urban semiotics points out that social meanings are embedded in city landscapes. We hear within a context that is shaped and determined by visual and verbal cues. Therefore, before I enter the church, I have processed messages that have been communicated by the visual denotations and connotations and have expectations of what I will hear. A multimodal analysis takes account of these aspects.

Structure of the thesis

In this chapter, I have outlined the motivations for the dissertation. Using a recollection from the mid-2000s, I argue that the music that emerged from the Black British gospel industry played a critical role in crossing spatial and ideological borders. This thesis sets out to explore whether similar border crossing elements can be observed in the congregational singing of the BMC churches under discussion. Following a presentation of the research objectives and rationale for the choice of churches, I then go on to discuss the use of terms such as BMC, African Pentecostalism, Praise and Worship, musical discourse and multimodal analysis in order to set out the theoretical framework and the concepts that I am working with. I also point out the two fields of literature to which this thesis is making a unique contribution.

Chapter Two is the literature review chapter where I demonstrate the contribution made by the thesis to the literature on BMCs. In this chapter I discuss the centrality of the oral to the Pentecostal experience, characterised as it is by the initial evidence of speaking in tongues (glossolalia), lively and exuberant congregation singing. I argue that although the link between music, worship and cultural expression is uncontested in the literature on BMCs in the UK and also in Pentecostalism, there is little systematic exploration or detailed analysis on how this is played out in congregational settings. I explore literature on African Pentecostalism and identify what we know about the role of music in these settings. Research on visual media and African Pentecostalism (Meyer 2006a & 2008, Mitchell & Marriage 2003, de Witte 2009) is interrogated. This work highlights the centrality of the visual connections in a Pentecostal setting. I argue, however, that the focus on the visual is partial as the element of the oral is intrinsic to the Pentecostal experience and attention to the sounds of the environment are necessary in order to fully

understand and engage with this dynamic scene. Finally, the second half of the chapter explores the challenges and opportunities as they relate to a globalised Christian music industry.

Chapter Three is the methodology where I discuss the theoretical underpinnings that have influenced and informed the research. I argue that the use of a multimodal analysis provides a unique framework with which to analyse congregational music in BMCs. Here I also use musical terminology to further emphasise the sonic arena and present my own reflexivity and positionality through the project.

In Chapter Four, I outline the geographical and theological context for the thesis. I present the primary case study New Wine Church (NWC) as an African Pentecostal mega church that situate themselves locally, nationally and globally in the context of the Royal London Borough of Greenwich and the wider international church circuit. In the second half of the chapter I discuss the church's emphasis on a prosperity gospel. This theological context is important in understanding how these ideas are embedded in the musical discourse.

Chapter Five is the first of my fieldwork analysis chapters. Here I use ethnographic vignettes to explore the location, external and internal fabric, alongside the images, text and the worship session of my primary case study. This provides the first stage of the multimodal analysis inspired by Machin (2010) in my case study on NWC to establish the continuities, connections and contradictions between the opulent internal and external fabric of the building, musical discourse and the theological underpinnings. In order to understand the significance of the sounds, I contend that they have to be explored in the context of the wider environment. This chapter also explores the esthetic elements as described above.

Chapter Six, using material from one service, assesses the immanent elements, that is the melody, harmony, rhythm and lyrics as the key elements for a musicological analysis and relates this to a theology, values and motivation of a neo-Pentecostal church that maintains a belief in a prosperity gospel.

In Chapter Seven I continue the analysis of the music in NWC by providing some background to the complexities of prosperity gospel and relate this to the changing musical sounds of the church by examining the poietic in the musical discourse. Using the words of the key players in the narrative, members of the Praise and Worship team, I then analyse how the musical discourse provides a framework within which the complexities and contradictions of the theology can be made operational.

In Chapter Eight, I widen the sample of the fieldwork to three other BMCs in the Woolwich area to ascertain whether the findings at NWC can be accounted for in other environments. In a similar way to the previous chapter I assess the esthetic element by categorising the songs and relating to their position in the CCLI chart as a means of assessing popularity in congregational singing globally. I am interested in whether there are different ways in which we might rethink the notions of local and global which simultaneously are complementary and contradictory.

The final chapter addresses the research questions, summarises the findings, and makes recommendations for future research. I summarise the similarities and differences between the musical discourse under question and suggest that in the case of the congregations included in this research, despite the many border crossing dynamics outlined in this chapter in regard to the Black British gospel industry, there appears to be

little in the way of a legacy from this period.

Using a range of methodological tools this dissertation will explore the negotiation of the local and the global through the musical lenses of four BMC congregations, and provide key insights as to how established and newly arrived faith groups comply with, resist and transform normative structures.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Global Pentecostalism is vast and diverse, containing competing, even contradictory theologies and approaches. Despite these diversities, Anderson (2014) identifies three commonalities amongst all groups: that is a belief in the experiential presence of God, physical signs of miracles and congregational participation. These facets at the heart of the Pentecostal experience denote that supernatural encounters are often mediated via the human faculties of the aural and the oral. The biblical account describes this as follows:

“When the day of Pentecost came, they were all together in one place. Suddenly a *sound* like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting.” Acts 2:1 New International Version (NIV)

“All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to *speak* in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.” Acts 2. v4 (NIV). (*italics mine*).

The above quote from Acts 2: 4, describes the experiential encounter with the Divine that typifies and constitutes the Pentecostal experience. The ‘sound’ of the wind is cited as evidence of an audible promise of things to come, and the ‘speaking’ was the tangible evidence of a miraculous encounter. The linkage of the ‘sound’ and the ‘speaking’ from the outset establish Pentecostalism as an aural and oral experiential encounter with God. Orality is one of the key elements central to the Pentecostal identity and construction of self. Many Pentecostal believers use speaking in tongues and singing as a means of mediating religious experience, building corporate and individual identity and exhibiting

Pentecostal performativity. Therefore, how a church sounds is of critical importance to the Pentecostal Christian. Loud music may often be the first sensuous experience encountered on entering a Pentecostal church service. Pentecostal Christians may choose not to attend a church due to what is perceived as 'dead worship', deciphered as a code for not liking the music or assessing the quality of music as poor. The manner in which the music is engaged and delivered in a church may also be an indication of the level of the Spirit's activity in that environment. A Pentecostal service enables facilitation of the public and private – there will be corporate singing, as well as periods where people may speak in tongues, and engage in private worship. Hocken recognises this interconnectivity between the private and the public and the impact of this music on Christianity.

'Being filled with the Holy Spirit always issues in the praise of God and of his Son Jesus Christ. The first result of the coming of the Holy Spirit is a flow of praise from within the believer a verification of John 7:38. The believer has a new capacity to give glory to God, evident in the spontaneity of the charismatic praise and symbolised in the gift of tongues. Together with this flow of praise has come a great explosion of new songs of praise, possibly unparalleled in Christian history.' (Hocken 2002: 514-515)

He goes on to emphasise that these praise songs are one of the nine constant characteristics of the charismatic movement, confirming the centrality of the oral to Pentecostalism.

The first half of this literature chapter sets out to establish what is known about the Black experience and congregational music. I will demonstrate that despite this core component of the faith, there is little research in Pentecostal literature, work on BMCs or the African diaspora church that explores this aspect in a systematic manner. Few scholars have attempted the task of deconstructing the core elements of the musical discourse, that is, the sounds, the music itself and the way in which the receivers and producers consume

and recreate the form. As noted above, orality is central to Pentecostalism. Drawing on examples from the African American experience I will demonstrate where some of these connections are made. Secondly, I will point out that in the field of Pentecostal studies some eminent scholars have omitted or made merely passing references to sound and music. Thirdly, I will review the literature from the BMC and establish the connections between music and the development of the church. I will then consider how African Pentecostalism is constructed in the literature and identify to what extent ideas related to the musical discourse are engaged. Following this, I explore how African Pentecostalism is analysed through a visual lens, and via ideas of prosperity gospel and globalism. The final section of the chapter focuses on Contemporary Christian Music (CCM) as an important and critical backdrop to some of the key ideas discussed. This exploration provides apposite concepts relevant to this thesis.

The primary aim of this chapter is to assess what we know about the interconnections between Pentecostalism and music and also to present a defence of my methodological approach. This argues for a multimodal method combining an analysis of the oral and the visual to understand the sounds in their environment.

African American Context

In the African American context, there is seemingly a symbiotic and uncontested relationship between music and the Black religious experience. DuBois (1903) in his seminal text describes the characteristic features of Black religion as 'The Preacher', 'The Music' and 'The Frenzy', citing the music as 'the most beautiful expression of human life', (DuBois 1903: 178) and asserts an unquestionable relatedness between expressive culture and religious experience. The centrality of music is embedded in the historicity of

that experience and numerous examples abound in regard to the use of music as a key identity marker and tool for liberation within this context. Notable texts include Ricks (1960), Cone (1972), Boyer (1973), Warrick et.al (1977), Boyer (1979), Burnim (1980a & b) Southern (1971 & 1983), Trulear (1985), Booker (1988), Lincoln and Mamiya (1990), Boyer 2000, Maulsby (1992) and straddle a number of different academic fields including Black religious studies, Black theology, anthropology and ethnomusicology. Rick's (1960) work is noteworthy as one of the first PhDs written about musical participation in a number of different African American churches. It is also of relevance to this thesis insofar as he establishes a relationship between the musicological materials, belief systems and racial identity, arguing that the performative elements exhibit African retention traits.

Another notable study is that of Daniels' (2008) who broadens the category of music to sound, arguing its role in challenging the Enlightenment's privileging of the visual. Sound, including moans, shouts and spoken utterances are presented as definitive characteristics of Pentecostal worship. He defines early Pentecostal sound as 'subversive' buttressing the sanitized sound of the Protestants. While Daniels (2008) does not use the term 'musical discourse', his work nonetheless demonstrates the ability that music and sound have to communicate multiple meanings.

Other scholars refer to the roots of the gospel blues, emerging in the Pentecostal revival at Azusa Street²⁵ (Boyer 1973 & 2000, Southern 1983, Allen 1991). Harris (1992) highlights the subsequent battle that occurred in some African American congregations in assuming a repertoire that was affirming of spiritual, artistic and social realities.²⁶ A key

²⁵ The Azusa Street revival in Los Angeles took place between 1906 and 1913 and spawned a series of multi-racial meetings led by African American preacher William J. Seymour. These meetings, where several people spoke in tongues are often cited as the beginnings of Pentecostal movement (Burgess & Van Der Mass 2002). Kalu (2008: 13) however, disputes this historiography and states that similar activities took place in other regions.

²⁶ When the mass migration took place from the rural South to the urban towns in the North, some leaders felt that the country folk needed to leave behind what they regarded as a lack of sophistication. The African

aspect of this argument is the role of music in asserting and affirming a particular type of religious aesthetic rooted in a contested identity position.²⁷

Furthermore, normative references are made to the link between Black Pentecostalism and the secular popular music industry and potential conflicts over differing worldviews. (Maultsby 1992, Abbingdon 2001, Reed 2003, Jackson 2004, Gallien (2011)).²⁸ This work is important in establishing African American Pentecostalism as a site where popular music is developed, negotiated and maintained. These scholars highlight the role played by African American Pentecostalism in the formulation of the popular music products and establishes its significance in terms of its musicological materials, psychological imperatives, and notions of a Black aesthetic. There is little in this work however that interrogates the musical activities inside of the churches.

Additionally, an abundance of literature identifies the importance of popular music as product and symbol of the Black church: key texts include Broughton (1985), Reagon

American Church became a site of major cultural struggle. Urban mainstream churches maintained a diet of the Western classical musical tradition and the African American version of these churches were expected to conform to the same tradition. Harris (1992) explains that in the early part of the twentieth century, one could hear movements from Rossini's *Stabat Mater* or Mendelssohn's *Elijah* in Sunday morning worship services. It was felt by some African American leaders that adoption of the high art Western classical tradition would enable African Americans to more quickly assimilate into mainstream white society. Daniel Alexander Payne, the sixth bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church was one who fought tirelessly for what he viewed as a 'higher standard of music' (Harris 1992:8). His view was that by adopting the gospel songs- the blend of sacred texts and blues they would be: 'hark(ing) back to the primitive "cornfield ditties" of enslavement' (Harris 1992: xvii). Yet it would appear from the literature that despite the pressure from the leadership, few within the African American church were prepared to accept this cultural domination; and according to Harris (1992) it was only a short period of time before the gospel blues took over and spread like wildfire through the churches and gospel music was firmly rooted in the emergence of the new African American independent church. The style and character of the gospel blues suited the new church. Ricks states that the religion of the emancipated slave was characterized by emotional prayers, appeals to the Deity, an abundance of songs, an impassioned style of preaching, religious dance and the 'phenomenon of possession' (Ricks 1960:62). The phenomenon of possession almost certainly had links with African religions.

²⁷ The essentialism of this position is not unrecognized. This understanding has to be located within the social, cultural and historical context. James Cone Black theologian assists in providing a cogent understanding of this background. In his seminal text "The Spiritual and the Blues" (1972), Cone has no difficulty in identifying certain styles and forms of music as expressively Black. These forms are Black because they are expressions and responses to the harsh realities and injustices of African American rural and urban experiences of white racist America. He describes the songs of the spirituals and the blues as being 'essential' components of Black identity and survival.

²⁸ Gallien (2011) presents an engaging analysis of Sam Cooke, Donny Hathaway and Marvin Gaye exploring how the musical skill, fluency of communication and engagement with the Spirit gained from their backgrounds in Holiness-Pentecostal churches contributed to their secular success, but also conflicted with them as they sought to reconcile what was viewed at the time as an insurmountable chasm between the sacred and the secular.

(1992), Costen (1993), Collins, Power & Burnim (1989), Maultsby & Burnim (2017). However, apart from a few notable exceptions in a similar manner to the previous category, there is little focus on music in congregation settings and its contribution to corporate and individual identities. Exceptions reside in the field of ethnomusicology and these texts have been instructive in providing methodological frameworks for this study. Namely Hinson (2000), Butler (2000), McGann (2004), and Smith (2004). McGann (2004) uses an approach called 'liturgical ethnography' where an attempt is made to understand liturgical practice within the context of a community's life, cultural heritage, social position and historical context. This rich ethnography uses music as a lens through which to explore the embodied theology of a Catholic²⁹ congregation in Los Angeles. A theoretical focus on time, space, words, flow and embodiment using a Black hermeneutic locates the cultural production within the social and historical context. A similar approach is used by Hinson (2000) whose entire book undertakes the formidable task of describing one service in the life of an African American church. He focuses on their interaction with the Spirit – describing preaching, praying, testifying and singing to 'explore the metaphysical and experiential worlds of the 'saints' (Hinson 2000: 7). Smith (2004) also focuses on a single African American Christian community exploring the interconnections between their religious belief and musical expressions. Butler's (2000) work takes a corresponding approach in identifying the musical practices of a single congregation but problematizes the notion of a homogenous Black aesthetic. He addresses parallel concerns to this thesis which responds to the Africanisation of the UK Black church. Butler highlights the 'transnational flow(s) relating to the Caribbeanization of Black churches' (Butler 2000: 34) His concern however, is regarding a difference of aesthetic. Citing differences in musical styles between African Americans and West Indians, he critiques notions of how a Black church should sound. What these four theorists share in common is a privileging of the

²⁹ Although the focus in this research is a Catholic congregation, the worshipping style described, is similar to that found in Pentecostal settings, demonstrating the impact that Pentecostalism has had on Christian worship.

belief systems of the congregations through their musical analysis and an in-depth focus using ethnographic methods. Influenced by these scholars, I have adopted a comparable approach in foregrounding theological belief, alongside an analysis of the musical discourse using ethnography to portray the worship praxis. Nonetheless, my work differs in significant ways. Firstly, the historical, cultural and social context in which my work is located differs; but secondly and, more significantly, these scholars present the musical discourse as integral and emblematic of their religious praxis and therefore non-problematic and without contestation. By using Nattiez's model of music discourse, my work seeks to understand congregational singing from an immanent, poietic and esthetic view point. This is, the experience of the music from an internal and external viewpoint. It is this external perspective that enables an analysis of the gaps, silences and ambiguities that may exist therein.

Music in Pentecostal Literature

Pentecostalism is now well established as an academic discipline and studied in some UK universities and as such well served by a number of specialised textbooks. Nonetheless, music and orality as described above and the juxtaposition of these aspects to a theology is explored in little detail despite the tribute made by renowned Pentecostal scholar Hollenweger (1997 & in Anderson and Hollenweger 1999) to the Black oral roots of Pentecostalism. The entry by Alford (1988) on Pentecostal and Charismatic Music in the Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements is one of the few texts that highlights the importance of music in Pentecostalism and gives a relatively detailed account of the role of music within a historical and biblical exposition. It also points to some of the recent developments such as the Contemporary Christian Music (CCM) industry and the use of media. However, due to the nature of the text as a resource, the focus here is explanation rather than critical analysis.

A search of key Pentecostal texts by Dayton (1987), Kay and Dyer (2004), Kay (2009), Kay (2011), Stewart (2012) reveal that apart from a few notable exceptions, little systematic attention or sustained evaluation is given to congregational music or singing in Pentecostal settings. Some of these exceptions include Cox (1995) and Hollenweger (1997 & 1999) who refer to the contextual relationship of the practice of Pentecostalism with orality. Cox claims that Pentecostals sing their theology (Cox 1995: 15). Hollenweger (1999: 36) similarly likens a Pentecostal service to a jazz concert, due to the spontaneity embedded in the liturgy. He uses ethnography to portray a visit of the famous German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer to a Black church in Harlem. In this short passage, his description of the choruses and hymns vividly emphasises the participatory nature of the service. Although I find his portrayal of a woman, not only singing with her 'unbelievably wide' mouth, but also her 'well-upholstered hips', 'thick legs', 'strong arms' and 'big swaying bosom' (Hollenweger, 1999: 37) lacking in respect and disconcerting, the physicality and exuberant atmosphere is nonetheless graphically conveyed.

Dayton's (1987) text is interesting insofar as it gives a detailed analysis of the theological roots of Pentecostalism. The preface to each chapter includes the transcript of the 4-part score of nine hymns, with titles ranging from 'Old Time Power' to the still popular 'Love Divine'. The use of notation denotes a prescribed discourse and suggests a specific type of Pentecostalism. The printed material further serves as a means of decoration and emphasizes the importance of music to this context. There is, however, no reference made to the inclusion of these hymns, and possible relationship to the theological subject matter. This is a lost opportunity to provide important analysis on how and why these songs have been used in particular contexts. Cartledge's (2006) introduction to the charismatic tradition contributes more significant insights to the role of Praise and Worship in Pentecostal settings. He recognises some of the favourite songs within the

CCM stable, and his text provides a general overview of the category. It is unfortunate however, that neither of these writers offer any detailed scrutiny into the opportunities or challenges the selected material may raise for Pentecostal leaders in attempting to utilize these repertoires.

Dove (2009) is a rare contribution to the field insofar as he outlines the role of singing in the Azusa Street revival by using source material. He identifies three different types of songs: singing in the spirit, new compositions, and traditional hymns. He points out the function played by the use of these compositions and concludes that an exploration of these sources demonstrates insights about the revival that would not be revealed elsewhere. Nonetheless, this is a partial account of the musical discourse. What is missing from this analysis is a reflection on the sounds, rhythms and instrumentation, and how the material was engaged in the service.

Some scholars recognise the importance of music and sound to the practice of Pentecostalism but are reluctant to engage in detailed analysis. This is observed in a chapter entitled 'Music and Liturgy' Hollenweger (1997: 269) makes salient points about Pentecostal worship as containing all the elements of the traditional liturgy. In so doing, he highlights an unrecognised aspect of Pentecostalism. This semantic distinction confers a status not usually accorded. In the same piece, however, Hollenweger (1997: 278) denies the possession of any musical skills but later discloses that he plays instruments, reads scores and has written a musical. These activities suggest an advanced musical proficiency. Nonetheless, he is unable to bring these technical skills to bear on his academic analysis of a Pentecostal environment failing to render any exploration of the musical discourse; for example, a focus on the songs, forms, rhythms, timbres etc., and the manner in which they are received and recreated by producers and receivers. This musical methodology could uncover critical insights on the composition and execution of

said liturgy. Instead he gives a very generalised assessment on the form of the service. This material is vital in establishing sound and music as core components in Pentecostalism but could have also been an opportune moment for one of the musically skilled veterans of Pentecostal studies to commit to a more informed aesthetic analysis.

Music in Caribbean Churches

There is little written about the early developments of the Windrush (post-1948) generation of Caribbean migrants starting BMCs in the UK. However, in a related way to the African American experience, scholars express an inextricable link between music, worship and cultural expression. Although early anthropological accounts (Calley 1965, Hill 1971, Pryce 1979) present a deficit model of the churches constructed around negative themes of withdrawal and rejection, they also point out that all the congregations had lively ecstatic worship in common. Calley's in-depth analysis on the style, type and instrumentation of the music demonstrates the role of worship in presenting a corporate identity as well as individual self-expression. Pryce's (1979) ethnographic study into the lives of working-class Caribbeans in Bristol is less rigorous in detailing the musical discourse but maintains that much of his time in the field was spent singing and compares a blues night with a service in a BMC. Unfortunately, his ethnographic vignette provides little analytical or critical detail to evidence these assertions.

MacRobert (1989) in one of the early PhDs on Caribbean Pentecostals in UK churches provides a more substantive account of the role played by the oral tradition and music. He affirms the centrality of the art form, acknowledging its role as a provider of entertainment, enjoyment, expression and identity formation. Unlike the previous scholars, he explicitly makes the links between a type of mystical 'African primal.... collective unconscious' (MacRobert 1989:465) referencing Herskovits (1941) survivalist strategies, citing a 'Black

leitmotive'. Although MacRobert (1989) does not use the term musical discourse, his analysis goes some way in conforming to this model insofar as he analyses the relationship between the music, the receivers and the producers. This work as a whole provides critical insights into the development of UK BMCs, and although the section on music comprises only a few pages it nonetheless provides an informative analysis into their congregational music.

Material by Caribbean BMC insiders (Smith 1989, Edwards 1992, Beckford 1998 & 2000, Sturge 2005, Aldred 2005) points out that the church played a formative role in providing a social and cultural haven away from the traumas of social disadvantage and discrimination in housing, education, employment etc. According to Smith (1989), the church gave people their dignity, nurtured their self-confidence and gave them back their humanity. Indeed, the ideology of withdrawal that Calley (1965) speaks of so disparagingly is seen as a means of protection that engenders the formation of cultural and religious subjectivities. These burgeoning faith communities allowed individuals within fledgling BMCs the opportunity to build an environment which reflected the practices, experiences and cultural norms with which they were comfortable. Music was central to this. They maintained their agency by rejecting the 'cold conservative worship style' (Mohabir 1988: 198) of white mainstream churches and affirmed the importance of worshipping God 'in their own idiom' (Brooks 1982: iii). Root's (1979) analysis emphasises the importance of agency and his references to music although brief, refers to the use of tambourines and the Redemption Hymnal. These are significant features of the musical discourse that characterised much of the music in Caribbean churches of the time.

According to Smith:

'There were times of real joy. Meeting together, tambourine, music, rejoicing and hallelujah. The way we know to worship.' (Smith 1989: 43)

There is an inextricable link between music, cultural expression, identity and psychological solace. Writers define a distinct musical style rooted in worship which was affirming of their cultural heritage, identity and means of expression, as observed in the African American examples. The ability to worship in this way, nonetheless, came at a cost; and Smith (1989) and Mohabir (1988) point out difficulties encountered due to complaints of 'noise'. This problem nonetheless resulted in Caribbean Christians purchasing buildings. Given the working-class status of many of the congregations – this ability to raise sufficient income to secure mortgages and sustain payments was a remarkable feat. Although not directly acknowledged in the literature, I would argue for a direct correlation between the need to 'worship in their own idiom' (i.e. loud and expressive musical participation) and acquiring capital, therefore, formulating and establishing independence in an alien and hostile environment.

Resonating with similar themes, Edwards (in Edwards 1992) and Gerloff (1992) provide more detailed and analytical insights. Gerloff locates musical expression at the centre of Pentecostal liturgy arguing that this is the channel by which the Spirit is mediated. Of the literature in this period, Edwards as a Pentecostal minister and musician³⁰ writes a more critical account of music within the Caribbean church. Affirming the embeddedness of music to Pentecostalism, he illustrates hybridity in the material strongly influenced by the congregations' cultural heritage. He prophetically cautions against the Caribbean sound and songs being usurped by contemporary material of African Americans and white British songwriters. This theme is taken up by Dixon-Mckenzie (2007) twelve years later in a brief article in Jagessar & Reddie (2007) who in examining the work of UK gospel music artists argues that musicians have denied their postcolonial and diasporic roots in

³⁰ Joel Edwards was a member of the group Kainos one of the first to pioneer the jazz funk sound in BMC circles. Kainos also courted popularity in white church circles by playing festivals such as Greenbelt and made an appearance on Granada Television's Pop Gospel (Smith 2009:102).

favour of an African-American aesthetic and worldview for purposes of commercial approbation.

Arguably, the work that brings the BMC into the Cultural Turn is that of Beckford, a controversial, academic writer and documentary filmmaker. He is the most prolific of Black theologians in the UK and has made a significant contribution (1998, 1999, 2000, 2003, 2004, 2006, 2014) in introducing the BMC to a more mainstream audience. In much the same way as previous scholars, he restates the importance of a distinctive worship style as germane to the establishment of Black Pentecostal churches. Like Edwards (1992) he acknowledges cultural hybridity and outlines the role that music plays in identity formation. He is concerned however about the abuse and appropriation of cultural products and the lack of political engagement. I am disappointed that given his cultural studies framework the analysis does not extend further to an exploration of the whole discursive framing of the sonic properties. There is a lack of focus on the semiotic codes drawn from the songs sung in the service and their representational connotations via the compositional elements. In his most recent book (Beckford 2014), more significant attention is paid to this area of discursive framing. In this text, the use of documentary filmmaking is discussed as an emancipatory framework to provoke Black Pentecostalism out of its apolitical and anti-intellectual slumber. This fascinating interrogation critiques 'colonial Christianity'

'...through the rapacious and avaricious troupes of the cannibal and zombie'
(Beckford 2014: 191).

Of particular relevance to this thesis is his assessment of the 'ubiquitous Black choir' which Beckford argues was the most popular image in the media of the BMC in the 1990s. Critical of this reductive analysis, in a parallel manner to my idea of border crossing discussed in Chapter One Beckford affirms the important role played by choirs in

building bridges between churches, denominations and people of different ethnicities. While I concur with this analysis, I would contend that the stereotype did not merely extend to the image, but also to the sound. High octane, soaring vocals, with syncopated rhythms accompanied by off the beat handclaps, are embedded in the robbed bodies and smiling faces flowing in impeccable time to the music. A heavy metal screaming guitar appended to the same image does not do the same work, hence underlining the need for a multimodal analysis. Beckford's output nonetheless, is a powerful, interrogatory critique and a unique contribution to the field.

By 2000, some fifty years after the first publications about the church, barring the notable exceptions above, there was little substantive analysis of the musical discourse within BMCs. In 2014 Dixon-Mckenzie completed the first UK PhD to analyse the worship practices of African Caribbean Pentecostals. Her work is instructive in documenting and cataloguing the customs and worship practices of post-war UK migrants. She challenges previous historical trajectories of Black British gospel which uncritically appropriate an African American heritage and argues instead for its distinct British Caribbean roots. While lyrics of some choruses are used to interrogate lifestyles and belief systems, the work lacks any detailed analytical account of the semiotic codes and modes of the music in context. Hence there is little reference to the music itself, the provenance of the songs, or the reception and recreation by receivers and producers. Is it unfortunate that a planned hymnological comparison did not take place as this would have yielded valuable insights to the sounds of the Caribbean churches in the post-war years.

Another essential academic contribution in the noughties is Encinas (2011) MBA thesis, This work focuses on the lack of commercial viability in the Black British gospel industry. Her work provides a crucial context to the area discussed at the start of this thesis. However, the focus on the economic machinations of the industry does not allow for a

consideration of an engagement with the music itself. Non-academic writings on the UK gospel music industry includes Broughton 1985, Smith 2009, Meade and Greenough 2011 and Odeniran 2014. The aim here is to describe the commercial music industry rather than a sociological analysis of congregational music.

Key publications about Caribbean BMCs since the turn of the century include Sturge (2005), Aldred (2010), Jagessar and Reddie (2007a), Aldred and Ogbo (2010), Jagessar and Reddie (2007b), Reddie (2012). This material reveals a growing espousal of Black Theology and an engagement with social issues such as climate change, homophobia, the role of women etc. reflecting a growing sophistication. However, apart from an essay exploring the relationship of the gospel music industry to the church by Fletcher (2010), and a discussion about the role of music in theology by Mulrain (1998) there is little systematic analysis regarding the musical practices of BMCs. Given the significance attached to Praise and Worship in BMCs, it is regrettable that Thompson's (2013) text on leadership challenges within UK BMCs, does not include a chapter on music.

This scholarship on the early development of UK BMCs gives an important context to the genesis and growth of the church. It affirms the centrality of lively and vibrant worship but offers little in the way of a systematic analysis.

African Churches in Europe

In this next section, I will present background to the growth of neo-Pentecostal African churches in Europe. I aim to show commonalities and differences with the Caribbean church and point out the gaps in the literature regarding music. While there is a good deal of scholarly activity on Christianity in Africa, there is less on specific congregations in Europe. Given the elasticity of the boundaries and the internationalisation adopted by

many churches, such precise geographical boundaries may not be the best means of categorization. Moreover, in recent years more material is emerging on what some scholars have called the New African Diaspora (Okpewho & Nzegwu, 2009). This designation more appropriately draws a distinction between the 'old' and the 'new' i.e. voluntary migration post 1990 and gives more credence to the transnational aspects to this activity.

Research by Ter Haar (1998) and Harris (2006) focuses on the role played by the church in helping West African immigrants navigate and negotiate education, menial jobs and family life in a hostile and alienating society. Harris portrays her respondents in a positive light emphasizing their agency. In a similar manner to Adogame (2013), Harris (2006) understands the considerable role played by religion in managing the everyday minutiae of life. The Cherubim and Seraphim church described in her book is more than just a supportive network; it is an institution invested with cosmological power giving individuals the skills and resources to negotiate the challenges of life in a new environment. Unlike some of the earlier sociological texts written about the Caribbean church, these writers take seriously the social and economic realities of newly arrived immigrants and endorse the spiritual worldview of their respondents thereby painting a more holistic account of their experiences. Significantly, both Ter Haar (1998) and Adogame (2013) consider the role played by praise songs in assisting migrants to endure the immigration process.

Adogame (2013) also reiterates similar experiences of rejection reminiscent of those suffered by the Caribbean church. He reports the feedback of Olu Abiola:

'I was told at the end of the service by the officiating minister that I will be much more at home with my own kind and he directed me to a Black Pentecostal church.' (Adogame 2013: 68)

As a result of this, Abiola went on to establish the Aladura Church in London.

The Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) has received a good deal of academic attention in recent years. The church was started in Lagos by Josiah Akindayomi in 1952 and since 1973 has been led by Pastor Enoch Adeboye, former Mathematics professor at the University of Lagos. As one of the fastest growing Pentecostal churches in the world (Burgess in Goodhew 2012), RCCG has a globalising vision to plant churches within five minutes walking distance in every developed country; and five minutes driving distance in every developing country. They currently have 2,000 parishes in Nigeria as well as in 180 countries including UK, Germany, France, Haiti and Jamaica <http://rccg.org/who-we-are/history/>. The church started in 1985 in the UK with just four people (Hunt 2002: 201) and now have over 400 congregations in the UK (Burgess 2009: 255).

Hunt (2001), Ugba (2009), Burgess (2009) and Maier (2011) conducted analyses of RCCG churches in London and Ireland. They paint a vivid picture of an upwardly mobile social group, who are technologically savvy and global in their outlook. Eschewing the stereotype of marginalization and disadvantage, these groups according to Hunt (2001) and Maier (2011), are the new face of Black Christianity in Britain. They adopt slightly different doctrinal approaches and practices to their earlier Caribbean cousins (Hunt 2001), and many have a focus on prosperity doctrine. However, in common with the Caribbean literature, apart from a couple of references, there is little-detailed exposition of the musical practices. Maier (2011:53) in her PhD thesis on how RCCG members in London navigate the church's theology in British society, writes a moving ethnography of the church's Praise and Worship session. Burgess (2009) also cites one of his respondents who highlights the importance of worship to social action. Unfortunately, in neither of these cases, are details given as to the origin of the songs or the style of music.

A key exception is Adedibu (2012:144) whose historical survey of both Caribbean and African churches systematises three types of worship style in UK BMCs identified as traditionalists, dual modal, and contemporary respectively. The first category identifies songs from their cultural background, using a combination of western and African instruments; the second, are those receptive to the host culture, singing African American material; and the final category focuses on a mixture of African American and UK songs. While this section of the book merely comprises a few pages in a chapter on distinctive features of the church, this insight is vital in highlighting the diversity of approaches inherent in UK BMC congregational music.

Overall the above contributions are useful in signposting the relationship between music and the Black Christian experience. However, there are limitations insofar as the scope of analysis does not allow for an in-depth exploration of the denotative and connotative aspects of the sounds in their context, neither do they attempt to articulate musical meaning as it relates to theological belief systems or wider challenges regarding a global Christian music industry. But it is clear that one of the unifying factors across African and Caribbean Pentecostals is a lively ecstatic engagement with the sounds of popular music. It is my assessment from observation and experience of both branches of churches over the last two decades that many of the neo-African Pentecostal churches have adopted and copied the dominant musical discourse of the Caribbean churches to maintain the appeal and popularity of Pentecostal engagement.

This thesis contributes to the literature in this field by undertaking a systematic exploration of the sounds of an African Pentecostal church exploring the external and internal location, alongside the musicological material to assess the meaning-making potential in their context both locally and globally. This will be further related to another

three BMCs, (two of which are also African Pentecostal) in the same geographical area to identify contrast and continuity.

Critique of African Christianity/Pentecostalism

In the next section, I will undertake a brief exploration of the literature on African Christianity/Pentecostalism, as a means of contextualisation. This field is voluminous. This interdisciplinary topic covered by sociologists, anthropologists, historians, religious scholars as well as cultural theorists has garnered a good deal of academic attention in recent years, with a particular focus on the proliferation of Christianity in Africa (Gifford 1998, McGrath 2002, Asamoah-Gyadu 2005b, Kalu 2007, Kalu 2008). Christianity has existed in Africa since antiquity (Isichei 1995), however recent scholarship has focused on the numerical configurations. Jenkins (2006) points out that between 1900 and 2000 Christianity in Africa increased from 10 million to 360 million and from 10% to 46% of the population. Micklethwait and Wooldridge (2009) put the figure at 400 million. As previously stated, while there may be ambiguities over the exact numbers and the means of classification and categorisation, there is little doubt about the growth and the dominance of Christianity generally, and Pentecostalism specifically in Sub Saharan Africa. The oft cited 'centre of gravity' (Johnson, Barrett and Crossing 2010: 32) shifting from the rich North to the poor South (Robert 2000, McGrath 2002, Jenkins 2006) confounds the secularization thesis and constructs African Christianity/Pentecostalism as a powerful entity to be reckoned with, possessing the potential of reconfiguring the faith and producing new forms of re-energized Christianity (Adogame 2014: 5, Gerloff 1999: 275, Bediako 2000: 303), against a backdrop of declining Christianity in the West (McGrath 2002). These facts emphasize the importance of this area as a research topic and locates this prolific field in a multidisciplinary site. The scope of this chapter does not allow for an exhaustive review of all of the literature in this area. My aim therefore, in this

next section is twofold: firstly, I have collapsed the distinction between African Christianity/Pentecostalism to explore how the topic is theorized, and to assess to what extent musical practices are related to this religious and identity construction; and secondly, to discover what is known about congregational singing in these settings.

What makes African Christianity African?

In exploring the literature on African Christianity/Pentecostalism, it appears that many scholars use the terms uncritically.³¹ Given the increased academic interest over the last few years, some books and journal articles have included the term in their title (Adogame 2013, Anderson 1993, Chigor 2007, Kalu 2007, Kalu 2008) and it is rarely contested or deconstructed. Indeed, some scholars like Maluleke (2010) deny that it is possible to denote any ethnic, social or political characteristics to the term. He avers that African Christianity is not about skin colour but is a way of being Christian in the world (Maluleke 2010: 377). This approach suggests that there is little to distinguish African Christianity from the other Christianities of the world. It could be argued that the term is helpful in establishing a geographical and social context (Gifford: 1998, Meyer 2005) and scholars have appropriated a diasporic dimension (Adogame & Spickard 2010, Ter Haar 1998, Ugba 2009), as previously noted. This focus fulfils a role in deflating a certain amount of 'Afro-pessimism' (Bediako 2000: 303), as it sheds what some may regard as a positive light on Africa in a welter of negative press. Nonetheless, the term lacks precision insofar as, given the diversity of countries, it would be unreasonable to presume a homogenous application. Many of the texts dealing with this subject matter are monographs referring to

³¹ Despite this, there are a variety of approaches and commonalities in which the way the topic is theorised identifying what African Christianity/Pentecostalism is. Common approaches are contributions that Africans have made to Christianity through a historical and sociological lens (Hasting 1994, Isichei 1995, Olofinjana 2010, Adedibu 2012, Adogame 2013). Adogame's extensive writing brings another perspective in pointing out the role played by religion in the recent migratory processes (Adogame & Weisskoppel 2005, Adogame & Spickard 2010, Adogame 2013, Adogame, Chitando & Bateye 2013) emphasising the transnational links and the global reach of the religion.

developments in specific African countries, namely Nigeria (Burgess 2008), Ghana (Asamoah-Gyadu 2005), and Kenya (Gifford 2009) or European contexts such as Ireland, (Ugba 2009) the Netherlands (Ter Haar 1998) and Germany Adogame (2013) Therefore, use of the term is in danger of flattening out and conflating some of the contradictions and complexities inherent in this vast continent.

Kollman's (2010) aptly named two-part journal article 'Classifying African Christianity' is one of few articles that attempts a thorough deconstruction regarding the definition. He provides a fecund analysis detailing a history of classification outlining past methods and trends. According to his assessment, past approaches of identifying categories of 1) religion, 2) ecclesial loyalty, 3) cultural 'African-ness and 4) political engagement are prejudiced and imprecise due to their omission of Catholic and Protestant expression of the faith. He is highly critical of the prolific African church scholar Kalu who imposes a trajectory from an African Christianity to a Pentecostal Christianity. Kollman (2010) opposes what he views as an essentialist and generalist approach. His solution is a generational framing which emphasises enculturation and seeks to encapsulate all African Christianities. He includes the following features as inherent: translation of the Bible, Africans in evangelism and indigenous leadership, colonialism and globalisation of churches. While critical of Kalu's framing and methodology, his conclusion nonetheless appears to cohere with Kalu's dogmatic assertion that 'an identifiable African Christianity exists' (Kalu 2007: xi). While Kollman (2010) is dismissive of the third category listed, I was interested to explore how the notion of cultural 'African-ness' is understood in the literature and whether scholars have related this idea to music or artistic practice.

The notion of a cultural African-ness can be observed in the differences between the mission derived churches and the African Initiated or African Independent churches. It is argued that in the African Initiated Church which emphasised an embracing of an African

worldview we see elements that draw attention to a possible distinct African Christianity/Pentecostalism. Meyer's analysis suggests that the Independent Churches offered a more 'authentic' Africanized version of Christianity (Meyer 2004: 448). These findings are supported by other scholars who identify a difference between an Africanized Christianity and Western Christianity. This concept often relates to belief systems, and some have identified the term according to its identification with an African worldview (Chike 2007). Kalu (in Karkkainen) calls this a 'cultural villagization' (2009: 135) a melding of indigenous culture with biblical belief. This integration between an African religious understanding whilst maintaining Christian integrity (Chike 2007), assumes both a homogenisation of Christianity and a so-called African religious discernment (Magesa 2004, Oduyoye 2003, Chepkwony 2005, Oborji 2005).

There is a concern as to whether this level of syncretism is healthy. Galgalo (2012) poses the intriguing question, 'What makes African Christianity, Christian?' (2012: 5) Like some of the previous scholars mentioned, he adopts an uncritical posture to racialisation but is concerned that adherence to an authentic traditional faith has been previously overstated. My interest however is, 'What makes African Christianity, African?' Nketia makes the point:

'If churches in Africa are to grow as African churches and not as extension of parishes and bishoprics as some of them are now, they must be allowed to take root in the soil of African culture in which they are planted, so that they may grow in stature as institutions of our own' (Nketia 1958: 268).

Olájúb[ugrave (2001) is one of the few scholars that attempts to address this question via a cultural lens. He proffers an exacting calculation in his deliberation that African Christianity is Christianity practised in Africa with elements of African culture. Related to a highly technical analysis of the phonetics of the Yoruba language, this is one of the few interpretations of the sound of African Christianity. It is an interrogation of this question that highlights some of the core themes that I am seeking to explore in this work.

Music in African Churches

The notion of a cultural African-ness is rarely disaggregated to creative enterprise or artistic practice. However, much like the Caribbean literature, there are a few normative references to vibrant music related to Christian worship. King's (2008) ethnomusicological text is an important addition to this area. This edited text asks critical questions about the relationship between music in the church and local culture. The book points out the diversity of church music in Africa exploring the tangled roots of the colonisers' influence and the battle by local people to maintain indigenous music. A more equitable relationship is seen in the popular music industry. Parsitau (2006) highlights this growth in Kenya due to the dominance of Pentecostalism. Critiquing the link between religion and popular culture and rehearsing themes on Pentecostal liturgies already mentioned, she paints an upbeat picture of a thriving, successful industry which provides a creative space for women and children simultaneously drawing on African American influences while not negating authentic Kenyan sounds. Kalu (2009) in a similar manner considers the dominance of Christian music in African Pentecostalism, arguing that it has enabled a collaboration of indigenous and modern cultures. Another rare insight to the music in African Pentecostal settings is found in de Witte (2009: 190). Her ethnographic portrait of Praise and Worship in a Mensa Otabil's congregation at International Central Gospel Church in Ghana could be a description of a worship session in any of my fieldwork churches. However, due to the paucity of analysis on the wider musical discourse, it is not possible to engage in a like for like comparison.

This literature highlights that the term African Christianity is rarely analysed through an artistic or creative lens. We can ascertain the existence of a vibrant Christian popular music scene in some African countries reminiscent of the scene that I described in the first chapter, however, less is known about how this scene relates to congregational music or the wider global music structures. However, despite this deficit, there are some

themes through which African Pentecostalism is repeatedly analysed which are applicable this thesis. These will be discussed in the next section.

Visual Theorisations in African Pentecostalism

African Pentecostalism is often theorised through the lens of the visual. The focus in this instance is specifically on Pentecostalism and not more generally on Christianity as in the previous section. This work is of relevance to this thesis because it highlights the role of visual culture and the function of media as an essential means of studying religion. Recent literature in the field of religion, media and culture with its interdisciplinary epistemologies provide a fertile incubator for this approach. It is mainly, (although not exclusively) non-African visual scholars who are responsible for much of the work. These theorists adopt a more interrogatory gaze to the role of the supernatural. This methodology demonstrates the system of exchange, the patterns of relationship and the cultural symbolism within a historical context that is attached to artefacts (McDannell 1998). The field does not seek to elicit a straightforward impacts study unlike earlier work on televangelism which analysed the integration of religion and broadcast media raising concerns over the use of what appeared to be an unholy alliance between television and politics (Frankl 1987, Bruce 1990, Horsefield 1984, Hoover 1988). More recent work³² attempts to theorise and understand in a more nuanced fashion how the sophistications of science, technology and the modernizing materialities of the physical world map onto the effervescent, intangible notions of the metaphysical. It further explores how the power of the visual, might conflate, contract or contravene the place of religion.

³² This relatively new area of academic inquiry explores the themes of religion, spirituality, media and culture (Lynch 2007, Morgan 2008). This multidisciplinary approach covers a range of interrogation including religion and popular culture, religion and film, religion and media religion and popular music, religion and material culture, and religion culture and media. The work resides in a number of different formations but is broadly divided into 3 key areas: the use of media and technology by religious groups; the appropriation of popular culture as a meaning-making resource for theologians; and the use of the 'ritual dimensions of popular culture' (Goethals in Hoover & Lundby 1997) to challenge notions of 'authentic religion'. The growing interest in this area is significant in establishing the persistence of religion and spirituality in the post secular world.

The visual display conveys meaning both in and outside of churches. De Witte (2009) shows how media, i.e. films and television in Ghana both represent and is representative of what Meyer (2004) refers to as a 'pentecostalite' culture acting as a means of corporate presentation in the public square. According to Asamoah-Gyadu (2007), Hackett (2003), de Witte (2009) this culture has dominated the film, TV and video industries in West Africa. Scholars (de Witte 2005, Meyer 2006) argue that in Ghana due to liberalization of the media this means of representations has become so powerful that it has overtaken mainstream broadcasting. The dominance is such that, non-Pentecostal filmmakers have to conform to this mode of articulation in order to survive commercially, further emphasising the dominance of Pentecostalism in this region.

Films focusing on themes of demon possession, moral degradation, redemption and salvation as well as being a legitimate form of entertainment for born-again believers also become a site of struggle and contestation over the nature of good and evil as seen through the eyes of a Pentecostal worldview. Meyer (2004) uses Ferguson's (1999) 'performative competence' as a concept of style to analyse *how* things are done as opposed to *what* is being done. This is combined with Fleck's (1935) Denstil's 'understanding of style' as a means of binding people together which relates as an elemental mode of combining believers denoting how this is reconfigured in the public square. This performative mode erects boundaries of inclusion and exclusion. The notion of style with an emphasis on the *how* and its inherent policing mechanisms contain similarities to the way in which I have used the term musical discourse in this thesis. These ideas of inclusion, style and substance assume a crucial role when exploring the cultural practice of African Pentecostals.

Some scholars identify the media as a site of struggle between different religious groups. Hackett (2003) explores tensions between Christians and Muslims; while de Witte (2009) compares and contrasts the power of visual representation between Pentecostalism and African Traditional Religion (ATR) in Ghana. She argues that the visual is embedded in Pentecostalism, but not in ATR, which is said to present a counter-narrative to Pentecostal ideology and engages in secret rituals where the camera disrupts the working of the spirits. This is not the case for Pentecostals for whom the camera exemplifies and enhances the work of the spirit. The role of the visual is also emphasized in Gordon and Hancock (2005). They point to a 'Pentecostal iconicity' similar to Berger's (1972) 'ways of seeing', where viewers are 'coached' and 'disciplined' to 'decode' the images of many hundreds and thousands of African believers in rapt worship under the tutelage of German preacher Reinhard Bonnke generated by camera angles depicting these 'rapt' African bodies enthralled by the preaching of charismatic Bonnke.

The media representation and subsequent circulation in different formats serve to project and encode the spiritual power of Pentecostalism. A similar argument is posited by de Witte (2009) who describes how selective scenes are used to present the very best portrayals of Mensa Otabil's³³ televised services. A wide-angle lens is used, showing facial close-ups of the preacher laughing, listening and engaging attentively with the congregation to demonstrate his charisma and spiritual power. These television broadcasts through the depictions of particular images encode and embody spiritual power which can be released to the viewer, thus blurring the divide between onscreen and off-screen.

³³ Mensa Otabil is a well-known Ghanaian Christian leader, theologian and entrepreneur. He founded the International Central Gospel Church which consists of a network of global ministries (www.icgcva.org/overseer.asp).

TV and video also provide a means of 'binding and bonding' religious participants to leaders, 'imagined communities' (Anderson 1983) and to the divine. De Witte cites the example of a Ghanaian woman filled with the Holy Spirit while watching a pre-recorded broadcast of an Otabil service. This experience creates bonds between the woman, the televised 'community', Otabil and the divine (de Witte 2009). Asamoah-Gyadu (2008) in a similar manner, while appearing to adopt a notion of community which is fixed and bounded, explores how virtual communities are created in Ghana via the use of the internet, TV and video. Meyer argues that this has serious implications for the nation-state as it creates another space in which alternative allegiances can be produced (Meyer 2009).

A core theme in this literature is that media is intrinsic to African Pentecostalism. This is demonstrated in the work of Meyer (2006a, 2008) who has developed the concept of 'religious sensations'. Her research located in Ghanaian Pentecostal churches advances the view that religious feelings are induced by media within the context of religious institutions. These religious feelings make the transcendent 'sense-able' and builds links between participants and in turn form religious identities. She does not accept the simplistic dualism identified in the earlier work on tele-evangelism and suggests that religion cannot be understood without the intervention of mediation and therefore the study of said forms are critical to its interrogation. It is these 'sensational forms' that 'render(s) the divine sense-able and trigger particular religious experience' (2008: 3).

She states that:

'Sensational forms...are relatively fixed, authorized modes of invoking and organizing access to the transcendental, thereby creating and sustaining links between believers in the context of particular religious regimes' (Meyer 2012: 160).

According to Meyer, it is the sensational forms that produce the divine (Meyer 2012: 160).

She claims that modern media is central to the religious practice of many African

Pentecostal-Charismatic churches in constructing a discursive framework causing the religious experience to be inseparable from the experience of the media. While her chapter is not explicit on the precise nature of media, references elsewhere highlight the power of the visual (Meyer 2006). This work raises substantive theoretical reflection on the connections between the visual and the Pentecostal encounter. Morgan (2007) purports that we need to consider how people use images to construct their religion worlds. However, I suggest that as Mc Dannell argues:

‘the image cannot stand alone; it must be part of a human world of meaning to come alive’ (McDannell 1998: 16).

I contend that in the case of Pentecostalism, which has sound at the core of its ontology, we need to understand how sound and music are used in alliance with the visual to construct and perform religious identities, both corporate and personal.

Prosperity Gospel

Another theme defined in relation to African Pentecostalism and pertinent to this thesis is prosperity gospel. I will firstly present the background to the doctrine, analyse its relevance within the African context and point out the connections with media networks.

Variously named as ‘Word of Faith’, ‘wealth and health’, or more pejoratively ‘name it and claim it, or blab it and grab it’ (Sturge 2005: 138), this complex and controversial doctrine presents a challenge to mainstream Christian thinking in the 21st century. In its simplest iteration prosperity gospel, which has gained increasing popularity through the latter half of 20th century, teaches that God will give good health, extreme wealth and prosperity to his children if they claim this by positive confession and the regular giving of tithes and offerings.

The origins of prosperity gospel are tangled. It is a heady mix of Pentecostalism, New Thought ideology and American individualism premised on self-reliance and self-determination (Bowler 2013). It is this early 20th century US ideology of New Thought which detractors maintain is the most problematic to orthodox Christianity (McConnell 1988, Perriman 2003). This metaphysical ideology of positive thinking and self-help, advanced by Baptist minister E.W. Kenyon purported that we have power as gods, and our words can influence the material world. Biblical scholars critique The Word of Faith Movement for its selective interpretation of the biblical text, failure to engage with historical context, and its simple and contractual hermeneutic (Perriman 2003).

Prosperity gospel has been greeted by varying degrees of scepticism and outright disdain and ridicule amongst sociologists, theologians and church leaders. The Evangelical Alliance's Commission on Unity and Truth among Evangelicals, (Perriman 2003) on the Word of Faith Ministry, attempts a nuanced analysis of the doctrine. Whilst it identifies traditional biblical lessons that mainstream evangelicals can learn from the movement, it also points out heterodoxy in questionable beliefs and practices. Namely, an inappropriate understanding of salvation, an instrumental view of faith and thirdly an embracing of material prosperity inconsistent with the emphasis on the poor in the biblical texts. Some writers see the doctrine as having global ramifications and blame the subprime crisis that led to the 2008 banking meltdown on prosperity thinking (van Biema 2008). McConnell (1988) on the other hand, analyses what he sees as the 'dubious' roots of the doctrine; and while it is acknowledged that many of its leaders are sincere believers, he states that the movement is cultic and represents a counterfeit Christianity.

Within the African context, Azumah and Asamoah-Gyadu (2010) point to positive elements of the prosperity gospel, but nonetheless label it as a 'false gospel'. They accuse its teachers of unethical behaviours and state that prosperity gospel ignores

social and political realities that have corrupted the church and seeks only to service the desires of the rich and powerful over the ignorant and weak. However, by 2012 Asamoah-Gyadu adopts a more sympathetic approach and while critical of two prosperity teachers in Ghana (namely Otabil³⁴ and Anaba³⁵) recognises its prevalence in some African contexts. Scholars also point to the use of visual media, as argued above, in encoding and embodying a public and palpable evidence of the veracity of prosperity theology. The aesthetics displayed by expensive clothing, gold ornamentation and extravagant architecture (Asamoah-Gyad, 2005; Hackett 2003, de Witte 2009, Hladky 2012) alongside media representations including billboards, magazines and newsletters containing high-quality glossy images focusing on beautiful wives, luxury motor vehicles and even overweight physical mass as reality and evidence of the prosperity doctrine. Asamoah-Gyadu (2005) describes Nigerian pastor of UK mega church Kingsway International Christian Centre (KICC)³⁶ in the following way:

“The picture of Ashimolowo in a three-piece suit, and his posture are paradigmatic of the popular image of the charismatic pastor as both a powerful preacher and an icon of the prosperity that members seek” (Asamoah-Gyadu 2005a: 3).

It is argued that African Pentecostalism presents a message of Christianity in the public square via the use of media technologies that determines and conditions what counts as authentic faith. Media is intrinsically linked to the creation, advertising and hyping of religious communities (Asamoah-Gyadu 2008). The writers reveal an unease implying contamination of the message by the media, pointing out that the use of glossy images invokes the cult of celebrity and engenders a superstar lifestyle rooted in modernity. A problematic exists in that these media-saturated ministries who use public relations firms

³⁴ See footnote 33.

³⁵ Eastwood Anaba is a Ghanaian Christian leader and author.

³⁶ Kingsway International Christian Centre is the largest Christian church in Western Europe. Also see footnote 56.

to increase their 'market share' causing a dialectic link between the use of media, the content of the message and the pervading influence of mammon.

Although a global movement (Attanasi and Yong 2012), prosperity gospel has had a significant impact in Sub-Saharan Africa (Perriman: 2003). While it may be convenient to blame its popularity on print and broadcast media, free distribution of books, pamphlets, videos etc. and the proselytizing empire building of advocates who have erected churches, medical centres, universities, Bible schools in the region, and the appeal of Americanism (Gifford 1998), many scholars however, have pointed out connections with ATR (Perriman 2003 and Folorin 2007). According to Folorin (2007), prosperity gospel addresses the same problems as ATR, that is, poverty, sickness and demon possession. The poor social conditions of Africa make it an ideal breeding ground for this thinking to proliferate. Asamoah-Gyadu asserts that:

'...the African worldview in which religion is a survival strategy and in which faithful religiosity is rewarded with abundance, prosperity and increase has to some extent influenced Pentecostal thought...' (Asamoah-Gyadu 2013: 116).

Making a similar point Folorin, (2007) avers that most Africans demand demonstrable power from their supernatural beings and have no problem in believing in a God that can grant material goods. The socio-economic context also plays a key role in how the doctrine is interpreted. Alexander (2009: 66) notes that prosperity for an affluent American, may not have the same resonance for someone struggling for existence in the global South. Ministers such as Otabil (2004) have interwoven prosperity gospel with Black pride, encouraging Africans to take control of their destiny and not to rely on European interpretations of the Bible, making this brand of prosperity an appealing and potent mix for upwardly mobile young Africans (Gifford 1998).

There is a symbiotic relationship between prosperity gospel, media networks and mega-churches. Proponents of prosperity gospel need media networks to reach mass audiences, and mass audiences, real or virtual, can only be accessed if they 'buy into' and support the media networks. Bowler (2013) has provided the most detailed analysis of prosperity gospel in the USA. Her research highlights how Word of Faith ministers used media networks such as Trinity Broadcasting Network (TBN), Christian Broadcasting Network (CBN) and Praise the Lord (PTL) for preaching the gospel and amassing financial gain. Telethons, fusing together emotionalism, evangelism and entertainment, embedded in a discourse of sowing and reaping, were used successfully to elicit funds from the masses.

Therefore, for people battling social and economic disadvantage, the spiritually clad glitz and glamour of the televangelists, albeit occasionally beset by corruption and scandal appeared to offer a tantalizing alternative to the down-at-heel dowdy 'classic' Pentecostalism of their forefathers. Given the globalizing tendency of the prosperity gospel, increased migratory patterns, pervasion of the media networks, and the adherence to an African worldview, it is hardly surprising that although the doctrine has not received wholesale acclaim amongst white evangelical circles in the UK, it has flourished within neo-Pentecostal African environments (Perriman 2003, Hunt 2001).

Prosperity gospel is the most prominent theological doctrine at NWC. Many of the characteristics of the doctrine is evident in the sermons, operational practices and extravagant architecture. While much of the research pertaining to prosperity message focuses on theological and socio-political impacts, it is my assertion that by exploring the musical discourse – that is, the sounds as discussed in my previous chapter: the attitudes and motivations of the producers of the music; the history of the management of the music, and possible changing sociological, cultural narratives, alongside discourses

within sermons, multimedia presentations and the church's documentation - we can gain a deeper insight into how religious meaning, in this instance a prosperity gospel, is dramatized and reproduced within the context of a UK BMC.

Pentecostalism and Globalisation

Another way in which African Pentecostalism(s) is studied is through the lens of globalisation. Although a contested term, notions of globalisation are a key organising principle around which much of the literature is framed. This is unsurprising when considered in the context of the proselytising force of evangelical Christianity which lends legitimacy to crossing boundaries for the purposes of the Great Commission. With reference to Redeemed Christian Church of God, Hunt and Lightly (2001) state:

‘Notions of globalization and globality are appropriated as theological constructs and thus feature prominently in their mission statements and strategies’ (Hunt and Lightly 2001:121).

This is further authenticated by Meyer (2010) who notes the fusing of Pentecostalism and globalization - not as separate concepts, but as a ‘project’ seeing Pentecostalism as a response to modernity. Stalsett (2006) also points to the commonalities between neo-Pentecostalism and neo-liberal globalization. Scholars such as Meyer (2006a), Anderson et.al. (2010), Stalsett (2006) and Martin (2002) argue that the operationalization of Pentecostalism is global due to its ability to utilise technology to communicate ideas, the emphasis of large networking conferences and the ability to transcend the local by bringing believers into a larger international community. However, Pentecostalism operates simultaneously in two contrasting realms. On the one hand, it is a ‘religion made to travel’ (Cox: 1995: 102), and on the other, it is said to be ‘quintessential(ly) indigenous’ (Hock in Adogame et al. 2008: 99). Scholars (Adogame 2002 & 2013: x, Robert 2000: 56) maintain that it is both global and local. It differs in orientation in different parts of the globe and manages to maintain its local identity, but the common tenets such as interactions with the Spirit, experience of miracles, and lively participatory worship are

very similar worldwide. Kalu (2008) wrestling with the nature of globalization and its assumed standardisation, poses what is a critical question for this thesis. 'Do African Pentecostals merely implant global cultural forms?' Kalu (2008: 189). He is keen to rebut the dominance of Western hegemony and asks the pertinent question whether African Pentecostalism can utilize African cultural forms. It is this question that is at the heart of this thesis, and the question becomes more pertinent when considering the translocation from one cultural context to another. Therefore, this research will try to ascertain to what extent African Christianity relates its Africanness in a new cultural context.

In this first half of this chapter, I have argued that the aural and the oral are germane to the Pentecostal encounter. However, my analysis of existing literature suggests that although though the relationship between music and the Black religious experience is rarely disputed, there is little systematic exposition of this relationship in the literature. I have also maintained that in a similar manner, African Pentecostalism has been theorised in a number of salient ways, including the role of the visual, globalisation and prosperity gospel, all of which have relevance to this thesis, there is limited analysis to the sounds of African Pentecostalism. Having established that we know little about music in BMCs settings, in the next section I will establish what is known about Praise and Worship and CCM more generally. CCM is an important and critical backdrop to some of the key ideas discussed. This section will provide the context and background to the approach taken in this thesis and this exploration provides apposite concepts for the research undertaken.

Contemporary Christian Music

This next section will serve as a brief overview to CCM which forms the background and context to many of the key ideas explored in the analysis. In order to contextualize and appreciate the contours and the critical debates of this genre and its application to BMC

congregational singing in the UK, it is first necessary to briefly outline its history, understand its relationship to Praise and Worship music and be cognizant of the challenges and opportunities embedded in the genre. As stated at the outset, congregational music is a relatively new and emerging academic field, but there has been extensive debate amongst church leaders and worship practitioners in the Christian media, therefore I will draw on a mixture of scholarly and non-scholarly sources.

A number of scholars outline the beginnings of CCM (Howard 1992, Romanowski 1992, Howard and Streck 1999, Powell 2002a, Gormley 2003, Stowe 2011) which started in the heady days of the 1960s and the Jesus Movement in America. This counter cultural evangelical movement dating from 1967 (Stowe 2011) consisted of hippies, drug addicts and non-conformists who adopted a radical Christian lifestyle (Eskridge 2013). Challenging mainstream religious establishments, these young converts rejected the traditional hymns and staid melodies of their parents' generation, and keenly embraced the excitement and vibrancy of rock and roll (Stowe 2011) appropriating the styles of their secular counterparts while emphasizing

'...their most fundamental beliefs wrapped in a package of rock and roll music and fun, fun, fun' (Howard & Streck:1999: 3).

This popular music seemingly blurring distinctions between the secular and the sacred (Evans 2006) provided an important identity resource for young believers to encapsulate and project their evangelical beliefs. The anthem of the movement was arguably 'Why Should the Devil Have All the Good Music'³⁷ (Romanowski 1992), written by the Father of the Movement, Larry Norman. This simple rock and roll tune fused driving rhythms and repetitive lines and allowed ex-hippies to rail against their supernatural enemy while embodying faith and a cultural aesthetic reflective of their time and age. These highly

³⁷ This song title was coined from William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army who also used the popular tunes of the day combined with Christian lyrics as a means of presenting the gospel.

successful new songs fused with fundamentalism (Romanowski 1992) became the soundtrack to this movement (Wood and Walrath 2007). Additionally, this coincided with the 1970's second Vatican Council's call to localise worship (McGann 2004) and the start of the charismatic movement. In 1973 Chuck Smith from Calvary Chapel in Costa Mesa, California launched the music publishing and recording label, Maranatha (Stowe 2011). This move enabled the possibilities of local songs owned and controlled by their creators to become part of a system where it was possible to circulate and distribute music on a mass global scale.

Originally, Christian labels were independently owned but as its popularity grew, the genre attracted the attention of the major record companies Weissman (2010) and CCM is now a highly lucrative industry. In 2001 the genre made more than \$1 billion in sales, 12 percent of the overall industry (Powell 2002b) and this at a time when the secular industry was struggling. In 2007 Christian album sales in the US represented 6.6% of album sales, higher than classical, Latin or jazz (www.cmta.com/GMA_Industry_Overview_2008.pdf). It is one of the fastest growing areas of music outstripping sales in classical, jazz and New Age (Stowe 2011: 1), moving from an industry in the 1980s to an empire in the 1990s (Lindenbaum 2009). CCM has now hit the mainstream. Billboard and iTunes have their own CCM charts and it is possible to download CCM playlists from Spotify.

Scholars have deliberated on the nature and the purpose of CCM and the topic has caused a good deal of vigorous debate amongst theologians, practitioners and academics over a number of years (Fishwick and Browne 1987, Hamilton 1999, Dawn 1995, Hartje 2009, Stetzer 2013). Howard and Streck (1999) were among the first academic commentators to interrogate CCM. They described it as a 'splintered art world' which resonates with Howard's (1992) 'sub' and 'counter' culture and chimes with

Powell's (2002) 'parallel universe' and Stowe's (2011) ghetto. All of these terms in varying degrees attempt to negotiate the problematic at the heart of the movement. That is, is CCM separate from or embedded with mainstream culture?

CCM operates as a subculture insofar as it created its own institutions through writing that falls into the category of popular Christian music written by and designed for a specific market of evangelical Christian believers. The music is further defined by its function and its means of distribution. Covering all popular genres, the music is used for the purposes of worship and evangelism and it is sold mainly in Christian shops or churches, played on Christian stations, and at Christian concerts or festivals (Weismann 2010). It is circulated through record companies, labels, distribution networks, award shows, radio stations, TV shows, magazines, festivals, stars etc. all of the paraphernalia of what could be described as a Christian culture industry providing a channel for evangelicals to resist mainstream culture (Gormley 2003) and perform identity.

However, according to some theorists, the genre should also play a counter cultural role in acting as a corrective to both the church and the dominant ideology (Howard and Streck 1999) by raising issues such as justice for marginalised groups and highlighting concerns regarding the arms race. (Howard 1992). But as the only form of music solely defined by its 'spiritual' dimension (Romanowski 2005), where the definition of the genre is dependent on the lyrics, belief system and lifestyle of the artist, the genre's adherence to the consumerist market place, engendered a fierce moral policing of its boundaries to ensure continued economic success.³⁸ These two roles were often found to be at odds with each other. Consequently, those artists who found themselves in situations

³⁸ A recent example of this was seen when Vicky Beecham evangelical worship leader experienced a boycott on her songs after she came out as a lesbian (www.christiantoday.com/article/vicky.beecham.same.sex.marriage.should.be.celebrated/38316.htm).

perceived to be sexually ambiguous or immoral were invariably removed from Christian radio stations, festivals, and concert programming, resulting in a subsequent decline in the polls and the eventual removal of her material from the evangelical subset.

Praise and Worship music which is the topic under discussion in this thesis is a subsection of CCM, (sometimes the terms are used interchangeably). Praise and Worship is the fastest growing branch of CCM. Redman claimed in 2002 that the genre had more impact in the last 25 years, than any other music in the previous 75. From its early beginnings in Calvary Chapel, the genre has produced thousands of congregational songs, many of them from Pentecostal churches. Redman's definition describes CWM as:

‘genres of popular music produced over the past thirty years by North American Protestant recording and publishing companies, churches, and individuals’
(Redman 2002: 47).

While the geographical location is no longer completely accurate, as will be discussed later, the commodification engendered by mass media and the collapsing of boundaries between music industry marketers, churches and ‘ordinary’ churchgoers is an area of interest to academics and religious leaders alike.

Praise and Worship finds itself in a similarly ambiguous position as CCM. The genre has experienced huge popularity and its stretch has been global and cross denominational. Indeed, many in Christendom, both Pentecostal and non-Pentecostal are familiar with this repertoire and practice. However, its arrival in congregational settings is also decried as one of the most controversial issues facing the church (Miller 1993: 1).

Criticisms of Praise and Worship

The arrival of Praise and Worship music in congregations has been dubbed as the 'worship wars', (Hamilton 1999, Liesch 1996 & 2007, Wood and Walrath 2007, Ingalls 2008, Evans 2006, Stetzer 2013). Described variously as 'long and bloody' (Woods and Walrath 2007: 13) and the 'greatest revolution' (Liesch 2001: 177) these so called 'wars' signalled the battle that ensued when some churches attempted to move away from the traditional hymnody i.e. Watts and Wesley to the inclusion of more popularist sounds. This included an emphasis on multimedia presentations and highlighted congregational music as a site of considerable struggle, not only in evangelical settings, but also in mainstream churches. Ingalls (2008) describes a change in the social organization of church music describing how Praise and Worship teams displaced choirs and music ministers with worship leaders who assumed a much greater role in giving exhortations and leading people into the presence of God. This move engendered the cult of the celebratory worship leader mediated via conferences and the mass media. While there is little written from a UK perspective, Ward (2005) in one of the few books on the topic, points to similar challenges in evangelical circles. Unfortunately, his analysis does not extend to the BMCs.

Some criticisms of Praise and Worship music relate to a lack of depth regarding its theological content, and its depleted Christology (Goodliff 2009). According to Gawronski,

'Written, no doubt, within the past 20 years, it is a piece of that resigned sentimentality that is characteristic of 'easy listening music.' Although pleasant enough it is spiritual Wonder bread: It utterly lacks roots, depth, sustenance, it is all right as a starter, to open the heart to prayer. But unless fed by some solid food...serious seekers will turn elsewhere' Gawronski cited in Dawn (1995: 172).

Dawn (1995) lay theologian, is damning in her analysis. Adopting a theological perspective as an insider, she is provocative in accusing the church of 'dumbing down' by

the incorporation of popular tunes. She argues that the new repertoire lacks the ability to appropriately nurture Christian commitment or communicate sound Christian doctrine signalling her concern that the music demanded much less from its adherents than they were capable of giving. Dawn's admission that her ideas are inspired by research stating that children have slower brains due to watching T.V. may seem dated and old fashioned now but give some indication of an elitist approach. While she does appear at the start of the book to argue for a 'both and' position rather than the opposing dialectics of 'either or' (1995: 4), she nonetheless concludes by blaming the new music for declining church attendance. Lucarini (2002) writing as a former worship leader and musician is equally damning in his analysis but is representative of the conservative response to CCM arguing that it is 'divisive' and 'immoral' (Lucarini 2002: 16).

Wood and Walrath's (2007) edited text attempt a more nuanced approach in conducting an empirical analysis of 77 top Praise and Worship songs. This cross multidisciplinary analysis, carried out by various academics in the field, presents an appropriate model for interrogating church music and I have adopted aspects of this for my own methodology. Paris (2007) in this research found there was an emphasis on romantic love in many songs, casting God as the leading man and humans as the leading lady riding off together in the sunset. While it is acknowledged that love is a key theme in many church songs, these songs noted as 'Jesus is my Boyfriend' emphasized an American ideal, mirroring an over sexualized culture. Further content analysis revealed that few songs focused on issues of justice and righteousness (Howard 2007) or the theme of suffering.

Additionally, the adherence of the music to the marketplace is viewed by many theologians and commentators as negative (Ward 2005). It is said that 'Jesus per minute' lyrics will grant chart success on Christian radio (Lindenbaum 2009). Some argue that the emphasis on monetary gain produces content which is immediately appealing, highly

seductive and fuelling a consumerist attitude toward music resulting in a product that is the polar opposite to earlier forms of Christian music (Faulkner 1996). Nekola (2016) advances a more persuasive argument applauding the potential of technology and commodification arguing that this enables worshippers to simultaneously demonstrate their membership of a community, pleasure and spiritual transformation and contains the possibility of making the gospel relevant to a modern generation.

The growth in Praise and Worship music and subsequent mass distribution and consumption has posed problems not only for congregations but also for songwriters and record labels needing economic reimbursement for their labour. The subsequent decline in the use of hymn books and the advent of the overhead projector and later data projectors found many churches photocopying lyrics and song sheets unaware of copyright obligations, and unwittingly, in contravention of the law (Weissman 2010).

This led to the creation of the Christian Copyright Licensing International (CCLI). This organisation collects royalties on behalf of Christian songwriters to safeguard their economic and moral rights in a creative work. From an economic stance, this ensures that creators are paid for the use of their work and also enables a moral protection whereby their work cannot be changed without permission (<http://uk.ccli.com/>). A license is not needed to perform or broadcast music in an act of worship but is needed for the visual display and reproduction of lyrics or music. The cost of the license is dependent on the size of a congregation and ranges from £48.00 annually for a congregation of up to 14 people to £724.00 for a congregation between 3,000 – 4,999 people (<http://uk.ccli.com/>). Established in UK in 1985 as CCL by a number of Christian publishing companies and record labels, CCLI the global conglomerate took over in 1997 (<http://uk.ccli.com/>).

The issue of paying for a license for singing worship songs has caused mixed responses from the Christian community. The common response from detractors is that:

‘worship songs were given by the Holy Spirit and therefore it was wrong to require payment of royalties for their use in worship’ (Ward 2005: 84).

A similar reluctance is seen in a mammoth 94-chapter online book entitled ‘Killing the Cancer of Worship Licensing’ where some believers voice their concern about a seemingly unholy alliance with mammon. Citing the First Amendment, they argue that copyright protection is not necessary for material used for the worship of God (<http://yhvh.name/?w=1115>). Similar opinions are also expressed by Michael Thelander who alludes to opponents of the license as saying:

1. Worship music is from the Spirit and for the Spirit.
2. God inspires it, and we simply shape it and sent it back to Him as praise.
3. Why, therefore, should we pay for a license to cover our use of this God-given music? (<http://worshipfuel.com/in-the-world-but-not-of-it/>).

While these views expressed in these US online blogs are not a scientific method to assess opinions on CCLI they give a snapshot of some of the anecdotal, antagonistic feelings expressed. In contrast, some songwriters and music industry professionals focused on business practicalities maintain that CCLI is merely fulfilling a service, and without it creators would not be paid. Ward (2005) adopts a more nuanced approach by balancing both sides of the argument. He points out that although the mechanisms established by CCLI are important in ensuring that songwriters are appropriately remunerated for their work, this shift has catapulted the worship arena into one which focuses on media and business relationships. However, regardless of the position adopted, if the 21st century church engaged with reproducing songs from the Praise and Worship catalogue ignore the processes of CCLI, they may be in contravention of the law. Nonetheless, CCLI poses a challenge insofar as an international outlet currently

operating in Europe, the Americas, Asia Pacific and Africa perusal of the charts show that the top 25 songs in all of these regions are virtually identical, thus rising issues for the local identities of congregational singing.

Global and Local in Praise and Worship

Cited as the lingua franca of twenty century Christian communities globally, (Evans 2015) some scholars argue that these copyright processes and commercialisation has engendered a homogenisation of Praise and Worship music (Perkins 2015). People 'vote' for Praise and Worship by attending concerts, downloading music and purchasing CDs (Yong 2015: 284). This inevitable connection with commercial empires is a problem for many, causing an undermining or even deletion of local songs. This is argued most vividly with Hillsong, arguably one of the most successful elements of the global Praise and Worship output. The largest and most influential megachurch in Australia Hillsong Music '...represents the sound of Australian Christianity' (Evans 2006: 93). Hillsong, started in August 1983, founded by Brian and Bobbie Houston has attracted a good deal of academic attention in the field (Connell 2005, Evans 2006, Goh 2008, Riches and Wagner 2012, Wagner 2014, Hartje-Doll 2013, Evans 2015).

Evans (2006) provides a detailed historical, theological musicological analysis of Hillsong music. He identifies the changes that have taken place in modern church music and like others is critical of Hillsong's dominance of the market place comparing it to fast food chain McDonald's. According to Evans (2006) \$21,000,000 is amassed each year from recording sales and Hillsong is engaged in creating transnational, global Christian music which is the same whether you are in Sydney or in Singapore.

Hillsong is blamed for the disappearance of the local. Mindful of the difficulties of translation and access to global networks, Evans highlights the challenges Pentecostal communities face in interpretation in regard to language and nuance of speech (Evan in Ingalls and Yong 2015). However, not all scholars view the dominance of the global in a negative light. Klaver (2015) argues that evangelical Christians can use Praise and Worship music to locate their positionality within globalization. In a similar manner Justice (2016), in her analysis of a Protestant church, state that congregations can define a local identity by asserting navigation through the different styles. Oosterbaan (2015) on the other hand, in his analysis of Gospel Funk in Rio de Janeiro, argues that it is overly simplistic to reduce these elements merely to the commercial imperative of the market. He focuses instead on the proselytizing ambitions of the singers interviewed. Boone (2015) also argues for a more multifaceted and nuanced response to the marketplace. In his moving account of an African American congregation's response to the death of their minister within a theological context of 'wealth and health' vividly elucidates how music and dance are used to communicate the unspeakable. The non-linguistic and extra linguistic elements of the dance provide a space for these 'church mothers' to communicate their sorrow. This chapter not only focuses on the interplay between music and dance as a creative expression in many Pentecostal settings, (an area given scant academic attention), but his 'insider' approach does not negate the 'church mothers' dance as inauthentic but sees this as a legitimate means of expressing their sorrow. Bonne (2015) acknowledges the role played by commercial products in engendering a freedom of expression. He notes that charges of consumerism are complex, particularly in contexts where African Americans are battling issues of discrimination and have not accumulated wealth.

Racialisation of CCM

There are few references to race in the literature on CCM and Praise and Worship music, which is surprising given the racial divide that exists within American society and churches. Dr Martin Luther King famously said that 11.00 am on Sunday morning was the most segregated hour in America (cited in Barndt 2011: 1). Little appears to have changed in the 21st century with Cusic's assertion that the church in America is still its 'most segregated institution' (Cusic 2002 vii). It is also evident that Praise and Worship exists within a racialized paradigm often defined by its separation from and its distinctiveness to African American gospel (Powell 2002b: 12, Cusic 2002: viii Dyson 1993: 325). This, despite the role played by African American gospel artist Andrae Crouch³⁹ in the Jesus Movement (Stowe 2011: 97). According to Banjo and Williams (2011) in one of the few academic articles that tackles the subject, Black gospel music was specifically marketed to AA and CCM marketed to white people. A second article written by Banjo and Williams (2013) found that Black listeners were very receptive to CCM, but white listeners did not afford the same response to Black music. Furthermore, AA products suffer from a lack of sales in Christian outlets and radio (Harrison 2005) due to racism in the industry. The disquiet is vividly echoed by AA gospel artist Bebe Winans who felt:

'raped by people who are supposed to be kindred spirits' (cited in Powell, 2002b).

Pollard (2008) however provides a wider context by pointing out that when the category was first created by the Gospel Music Association⁴⁰ it was white artists that were nominated. However, when Black artists such as Alvin Slaughter and Ron Kenoly adapted their music and started performing for white audiences they too were included in

³⁹ See footnote 2.

⁴⁰ The Gospel Music Association is a US based membership and networking organisation set up for the development and promotion of Christian music. They host the prestigious annual Dove awards which recognises outstanding achievements to the field.

the category. She paints a positive picture of Black and white artists and audiences sharing a:

‘virtual togetherness as they buy the same music and then listen to it in their individual cars, homes, or on their desktops and iPod’ (Pollard 2008: 35).

Pollard identifies the impact that the new music has had on a number of AA churches where different approaches have been taken to incorporate the genre. Overall, her assessment is a positive one where some AA churches have successfully embraced a multi-cultural model of Praise and Worship. However, we do not know to what extent this multicultural adoption has been undertaken in non-AA churches.

Ingall’s (2016) research does not relate to ethnicity but she demonstrates that British worship music has had a huge impact in the US. Using data from the CCLI charts she provides evidence on the growth that has taken place in the sales of material by UK songwriters such as Graham Kendrick, Matt Redman and Tim Hughes. She points out that prior to 1990s the flows between US and UK were one way, however following meetings with US music executives and UK songwriters, executives felt that the UK songs were more authentic enabling a more genuine experiential encounter with God. The US executives used the UK as an idealized Christian community unsullied by divisions in US society. As a result, they prioritised and promoted the marketing of UK songwriters resulting in a greater demand amongst the US market. In this instance, the multi-cultural sharing referred to by Pollard (2008) is not in evidence, and the UK songwriters identified were not representative of UK BMCs.

Conclusion

In the first half of this literature review chapter, I have argued that the aural and the oral are embedded in the Pentecostal encounter. This is clearly established in literature pertaining to the African American religious experience. However, even though there

appears to be a similarly symbiotic relationship between vibrant music and the UK Black Christian experience which is rarely contested, there is little that explicates this relationship in a detailed or systematic manner. I go on to contextualise neo-Pentecostal African churches in Europe and then explore how the subject is theorised. I identify three key means of interrogation as the visual, prosperity gospel and globalisation as they relate to Pentecostalism. Although the work on the visual identifies vivid and tangible aspects of a Pentecostal culture, particularly in regard to a prosperity gospel, I maintain that Pentecostalism is oral in orientation and therefore an analysis which fails to take account of this aspect is partial. It is my contention that the addition of the oral adds more depth and nuance, giving a fuller 'picture. In order to appropriately interrogate Pentecostalism, one needs a methodology which is multimodal.

Given the interconnectedness between Pentecostalism and globalism, an exploration of the musical discourse provides a useful lens through which to decipher and delineate the navigation of the global and the local and add to our understanding of how some migrant churches negotiate their religious and musical identities. It will also reveal how sites of cultural production are policed and mediated.

The second half of the chapter provides the context and the background to the global Christianity music industry. Although Praise and Worship has spawned vigorous controversies, many of the border crossing elements that I referred to in the Black British gospel scene in the first chapter can be observed in the genre. Areas such as crossing sacred and secular space, the use of musical styles deemed inappropriate for Christian worship and perhaps most importantly (unlike the Black British gospel industry) the germination of a scene of international proportions bringing into sharp relief the circumnavigation of the local and the global. Despite these radical beginnings, much within Praise and Worship has become standardised and deemed not be inclusive. The

Black British gospel scene should arguably be part of CCM, but as demonstrated by the literature, apart from a few AA artists, CCM is often presumed to be white.

Overall the literature review raises questions about the types of religious and musical identities that are formed and evolved within migrant Christian communities in Woolwich. Recognising that communities often engage in erecting boundaries to safeguard prized elements of cultural production, a multi modal analysis which explores the inclusionary and exclusively borders of the musical discourse throws an important spotlight on the changing face of BMCs in the UK.

This research sets out to explore whether there was a shared musical discourse relating to musical and or religious identities. Furthermore, to identify how local and global concepts are determined and negotiated through the music. Songs selections and modes of presentations in church tells us something about the wider impacts of the globalizing forces of the Christian music industry, and how the local may be mediated in certain contexts. This thesis will address this gap by providing an in-depth analysis of the service from an African Pentecostal church and also a more generalised account of services from other BMC churches in the Woolwich area. This will add a cultural and artistic perspective to what we already know about these environments.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this empirical study is to understand and analyse the musical discourses of four BMC churches in Woolwich. I will analyse the presentation, function and maintenance of particular combinations of sound within BMC environments following their trajectory to global media networks. The use of energetic high octane sounds in these spaces are frequently regarded as a 'sign' of a BMC, but are rarely questioned or interrogated for their aesthetic, cultural or socio-economic implications. BMCs are among the fastest growing Christian communities in the UK and provide an important site for problematising the polysemic potential of music as a resource to suture identity vis-a-vis local and global circuits of culture. In this chapter, I will describe my reflexivity through the project using musical language, the data collection processes and analysis, and then go on to present and justify my theoretical assumptions.

Warm - up

A warm up in music, is a variety of exercises a singer or musician engages in to prepare the voice or instrument before performance.

My warm-up for this research, started as an African Caribbean, Christian female growing up in and around BMC Pentecostal environments in London as outlined in the introduction. As a young Christian, training to be a classical musician, popular music always had a major impact on the way in which I presented my sense of identity. Coming from a strict Black Pentecostal family, I was not allowed to engage in secular entertainment and therefore my social networks were determined and conditioned by my Christian faith and I attended Black gospel concerts on a regular basis. I was inspired and

thrilled by the jazz funk sounds that were emerging in the 1980s with Black British bands like Kainos⁴¹ and Paradise.⁴² I felt that these bands gave credibility to my Christian faith. The composition of these bands was drawn from BMCs and although I was not a member I occasionally visited these churches and was enthralled by the sounds that I heard. The jazzy chords, syncopated rhythms and the gospel licks played, were so much more exhilarating to my teenage ears than the Bach Two Part Inventions and the Chopin Nocturnes that I was forced to endure as I laboriously trudged through my piano and double-bass Associated Board grade exams. The sounds that I heard in BMCs and my growing record collection of gospel greats such as James Cleveland, Andrae Crouch and Kirk Franklin, amongst others, catalogued by genre and filed alphabetically were materially, symbolically and spiritually helping me to construct and project a sense of self identity, albeit while I wrestled with my double consciousness. Much like DuBois's (1903) warring souls, I experienced a 'twoness', two souls, two thoughts, two reconciled strivings. On the one hand, the 'Black' music, both Christian and secular that I listened to and loved but couldn't play, articulated and encapsulated being a Black woman in a white sometimes hostile and alien society. The 'white' music on the other hand that I played, but could not at the time fully appreciate, offered me the only means of a higher education, probable professional employment and a route to economic and social mobility.

It was the sounds of the Black UK and US gospel artists that gave a placeholder for my faith and I learned the critical importance of music, popular music in particular, to evangelical Christians.

It was also clear to me, that while there was burgeoning academic work about Black

⁴¹ See footnote 30.

⁴² See footnote 19.

Pentecostalism in the UK, there was little that focused on the elements that I found most intriguing i.e. its music. The choice of topic was very much motivated by my history, knowledge, interests and personal faith. My initial purpose for the dissertation, as outlined in the introduction, was to draw attention to the music within Black church environments and to critically assess some of the opportunities and challenges in an area where there was a paucity of research and the warm up was my history and my musical education.

Playing outside

Playing outside is a technique used in jazz improvisation where a player plays notes that are distant from the original harmonic location.

I am using this musical technique to discuss the much-debated notion of the outsider/insider researcher and present my stance in relation to the project. The 'insider/outsider' problem has been a part of academic study since 19th century (McCutcheon 1999). The two emic and etic historically pitched as dichotomous opposites, encapsulated the colonial mindset, characterised by the intrepid bespectacled Westerner venturing into 'darkest' Africa armed with his tape recorder and type-writer sifting the deep, unknowable secrets of the native.

Hinson's description, although lengthy is worth quoting in full as it so clearly demarcates this position as it relates to areas of faith:

'Thus, the conversation ends, the two sides still separated by chasm of belief. The Saints proclaimed the fullness of their reality, while investigating outsiders' declarants partiality. The Saints grant fundamental primacy to experience, while the analytical readers treat it as a product of culture. The saints celebrate subjectivity as vital to crafting meaning while 'objective' researchers dismiss it as ephemeral and idiosyncratic. The saints believe in a God who acts in the everyday, while most investigators – though perhaps also believers - dismiss the proofs that saints read as clear evidence of a holy hand. Finally, the saints accept mystery while disbelieving outsiders prefer answers' (Hinson 2000: 323).

Hinson (2000) here is critiquing the 'solace' of 'relativism' that is sometimes assigned to

the outsider position. Stringer (2002) on the other hand, poses the question sensibly:

‘Can we be a ‘participant’ observer in a culture that is not our own, within an organization that is not our own, or even in a community that is not our own?’ (Stringer cited in Arweck and Stringer 2002: 3).

The author here goes on to assert that research appears more authentic when one is a member of that community. He maintains that this position seems to embody a type of ‘ethical integrity’ that avoids the outsider posing as insider dilemma. However, the insider may find themselves unable to articulate or interrogate fundamental tenets of religious experience.

Clearly matters of faith, spiritual and religious experience, should not be concealed from the gaze of the researcher. However, it is my belief that the position of the outsider posing as insider is untenable ethically. Stringer (2002) establishes an insider/outsider paradigm and states that the researcher will find herself at various points along this continuum. I contend that this approach is too static, and much like ‘playing outside’ the researcher may find herself occupying both positions simultaneously. I am both insider and outsider in many aspects. I am an insider insofar as, I have attended BMCs for the last 40 years, and therefore understand and share some of the doctrines and theologies of the churches. I know the modes and codes of operation, I am familiar with the behaviour patterns, I understand the language, I am familiar with the dress; hat, or no hat, makeup or no makeup, trousers or no trousers etc. My locks hairstyle in some circles may position me as slightly alternative but are now generally accepted as a fashion statement rather than an adherence to Rastafarianism as would have been the case when I was growing up. I have on many occasions encountered supernatural manifestations characteristic of Pentecostal settings such as speaking in tongues, demon exorcism, being slain in the Spirit etc. I can sit in a Pentecostal congregation and not stand out – I can ‘pass’ in this environment. My personal history and religious affiliation enabled access and provided a position whereby relationships could be forged and utilised for the means of research.

However, I did not grow up in a BMC, nor did I receive my formative musical or spiritual education within this environment. I have had a formal music education and was trained as a classical musician; and although I have operated as a musician within a BMC, I was an outsider, as described above, to the musical processes. I was also an outsider in regard to my immediate ethnicity, although politically I view myself as a Pan–African, my ethnic heritage is Caribbean and not West African. My critical academic perspective also positioned me as an outsider. The analytical lens brought to bear on the worship arena would be unwelcome in some circles.

This uncomfortable position of playing outside was brought home to me most forcibly when I started the research. I naïvely embarked upon my research viewing myself as an insider researcher. When searching for a location for the fieldwork, I approached a large Pentecostal church in South London. I felt that this church would be a good choice on several counts, firstly, it fitted the category of a BMC of the old Caribbean variety, had links with the US and was not a new African independent church. It could be argued that this single case was representative of a much larger population. I knew that music played a key role in their services and was of a professional standard. They had a paid full-time minister of music who I knew – thus giving easy access to rehearsals, meetings, and people. Furthermore, it was not a church where I was personally familiar with members of the congregation, therefore hopefully allowing a more objective approach and enabling me to remain anonymous in the congregation. However, it was a church where the leadership would be aware of me and would not question my status as an insider. Finally, they had a number of different services in two different sites, and I could attend different services and compare and contrast the similarities and the differences.

Below are the field notes from my first visit:

I have travelled half way across London to attend a church which I think will be a good site for my field work. I am queuing to get into the foyer, there are several hundred people here in the transition to get the earlier service out, and the current service in. The congregation are mostly Black, but I have observed some mixed couples. It's 10.27am, and the doors to the sanctuary open, people crowd out, while others crowd in. It is a vibrant and lively atmosphere, I hear fragments of conversation and see young females dressed in highly fashionable clothes. I've just spotted someone that I recognise, I avert my gaze as I'm not keen to engage in conversation at this stage. It is important to maintain my anonymity, I'm there to simply observe, listen and record. There is a full band on stage, including a 6-string bass guitar. The musicians are very fluent, warming up. They start singing 'It is to you I give the glory' the song is transposed several times. When the service starts, I stopped taking notes during the worship, it felt wrong to be studiously recording without permission. The service is a very fiery Pentecostal, high volume, high octane, full emotional release. This is exactly the type of environment in which I would like to locate my field work. It contains all of the elements that I want to bring to attention in my work. After the service, I meet my friend, a musician that I know through previous employment. He is surprised to see me and tells me that he has been attending the church for five weeks. I'm coy with my friend about the reason for my visit, it would be more appropriate to have this conversation with the leadership, however, I do say that I'm interested in the music. He introduces me to one of the musicians, as a keyboardist. The musician remarks that he feels nervous, perhaps indicating that I might be after his job. My friend adds that I could read, (i.e. notation). The other musician is in awe, classical musicians in these environments are treated with a great deal of respect and honour. The musician says that he would be keen to meet up to exchange notes. I am delighted by this. I don't think that access will be a problem for me in this environment. I will make plans to approach the minister of music.

The Following Week

I had several conversations with the minister of music regarding the possibility of using the church as the location for my field work. He was very supportive and welcomed the opportunity, clearly seeing me as an insider. We spoke at length about the research. He appeared genuinely interested in the work and has often commented on the paucity of research of this type in the UK. As one of the foremost gospel musicians in the UK, he had a personal commitment to seeing work in this field advanced. The email correspondence here demonstrates this:

Field notes 23rd January 2011

Hi Pauline,

Yes, I will make a few inquiries and I hope you'll be able to go ahead with the study. Anyway I'm sure we need this analysis to really see the virtues and advantages of BMC's influence on the UK musical and spiritual landscape.

Talk soon ok.....

Blessings, (email correspondence: 4th February 2011)

However, I discovered a few days later to my chagrin that this enthusiasm was not shared by the leadership of the church. They had had previous negative experiences with journalists and media exposure, and although not questioning my status as a Pentecostal believer, nonetheless saw my research as a negative intrusion, hence outside the framework of what was construed as valuable within this context.

Email Correspondence from Church Secretary

I have been informed that we presently do not facilitate requests of this nature (research of any kind to be carried out at xxxx Ministries

directly or indirectly involving its activities or its congregation) as we have in the past unfortunately had adverse experiences where this has been permitted in the past. This has been a longstanding protocol for some time. There have been rare occasions where a request of this type can and has been facilitated in part but unfortunately during this time of transition of our church we are unable to facilitate your request. (Email correspondence 7th February 2011)

I was deeply disappointed by this response. I was so sure that my request would have been granted. The time of transition referred to, was the opening of another site for worship, and it was not clear how my work would impact on this. Nonetheless this email clearly framed me as an outsider, despite my insider credentials. My qualifications as a member of the 'community', counted for little in this instance – the purpose and the value of the exercise was not deemed important enough to grant inclusion.

Following this experience, I was a little distraught as I needed to find a new environment in which to carry out the research. This coincided with a decision to leave a previous church that I was attending in East London and my family and I decided to visit an independent African church in our locality. The church was a 10-minute drive from our home; there were numerous activities that my teenage children could attend, and I was struck by the professionalism of the church. Initially, I wasn't sure whether it would make an appropriate location for my field work. It wasn't what I originally had in mind. My previous history, and spiritual journey, had been with Caribbean Pentecostal churches. I had previously been a member of the NTCG, one of the largest BMCs in the UK for some 20 years. I knew little of the recently emerging African churches. This placed me on the spectrum of outsider. However, as I started to attend the church, I felt very comfortable with the practice and ritual, and could participate appropriately. It was easy to sit in the congregation and take notes on my phone and I was surprised that I was familiar with

many of the songs.

I spent three months attending the church before I decided to approach the leadership with a request for research. Following my previous experience, I was a little more tentative. Clearly, insider credentials - ethnicity, family ties, and faith were important components in eliciting access, but did not guarantee success. However, I was fully welcomed by the leadership in my role as a researcher. This partly due to the pre-eminence that the leadership placed on education.

Nonetheless, the feelings, emotions and belief systems that I brought to the project located me as an outsider at various points in the project. I also found it difficult to build relationships with people. In my previous church that I had attended for 20 years, I had forged some deep and meaningful friendships. My expectation in attending the church on a regular weekly basis was that this would naturally evolve. However, this was a slow process. Of course, when you are one of a several hundred people in a mega church, it is difficult to get to know people. Also, I may have distanced myself with the focus on my research, Hammersley & Atkinson (1995) warns about the critical distance that may be lost if a researcher becomes too 'at home' (Hammersley & Atkinson 1995: 115), the possibility of 'going native.' In any event, although 'passing' in the environment, participating in the songs and going through the ritual of Pentecostal worship, I was aware of my difficulties in negotiating a fundamentalist theology. There were times that I felt a close synergy with the environment and other times that I experienced real dissonance. A classic case of playing outside. Neitz (2002: 2 refers to this as a 'walk between the worlds' (Neitz in Spickard, Landres, & McGuire 2002: 35), and the challenges that are brought to bear when doing research in religious groups in attempting to negotiate multiple identities. So, much like the jazz technique of playing outside, I was a part of the ensemble at points in the process, but at other times I was located outside,

causing dissonance.

Trans(positionality)

Transposition is the process of moving a series of notes up or down at the same distance.

This is one of the musicological features used in NWC and one that is used repeatedly in BMC Praise and Worship environments. The technique of transposition is a useful one to consider my reflexivity in the project. In some ways, it coheres with the notion of playing outside. But while I am using the concept of playing outside to refer to my positionality in relation to the field, transposition refers to the movements that I made in relation to the project.

I started the research with the intention of simultaneously attending NWC as a place of worship sometimes with my research hat on, and at other times as a normal worshipper. I found the process of taking field notes exhausting, so during the period of the research I would occasionally take weeks off, especially Easter, Christmas etc. It felt appropriate as a believer to engage with the Christian calendar. However, as the research progressed, I found this duality difficult to maintain. In the 'down time' I couldn't completely disengage my brain from the analytical process. I found it difficult to participate with the worship activity without reflecting on my research questions. It was not that I had shifted my position in regard to my core belief systems, although as noted above there was increasing distance between my own theological understandings and some of the teachings in the church, it was that the environment could no longer fulfil a spiritual function for me. The process of research 'transposed' me.

Harmony

Harmony describes the simultaneous sounding of notes together to create a pleasing effect

The word 'harmony' also conveys a sense of living in peace with fellow humans and ensuring that one's actions does not cause distress or pain, which brings us into the area of ethics. Ethical concerns are an important area that need careful consideration in any research arena. This is of particular significance in the field of religion where respondents may be divulging information of a personal and sensitive nature. According to Thornton (1997: 214), ethical dilemmas are central to good ethnographic research due to the insider/outsider positioning along the continuum referred to in the previous section. In this next section, I will discuss some of the key ethical issues that I encountered during the course of the research and present a framework as to how they were addressed within the context of the project.

In the first instance, the selection of a church for the field work was an ethical decision. I chose to undertake the fieldwork in a church where I was unknown to the congregation. This was important in positioning me as a researcher and not allowing prior knowledge of individuals to colour my critical processes. Needless to say, over the duration of the course, I became friends with some congregational members, but I always ensured that they were aware of my role as a researcher. I chose not to operate as a covert researcher and secured permission from the leadership to conduct the research. They agreed that I operate as participant observer and as such I attended Sunday and mid-week services. My activities as a researcher of taking notes and or recording services were the same as many congregational members who also engaged these in these processes for purposes of personal devotion, so my activities were not regarded as unusual in the context.

The area of conducting semi- structured interviews could have also posed ethical

challenges. I spoke to music personnel in the church and congregational members about their experiences with music. In advance of any pre -arranged interview, I secured informed consent, ensuring that interviewees were clear about the framework for the research. Music is an integral part of worship in the life of the Pentecostal believer, and discussion about this area can be a highly personal and intimate endeavour. During the course of the research I noted that individuals were keen to discuss their experiences with me. However, I was also open to the possibility that such discussion might also invoke strong, emotional feelings and was therefore mindful of Wiles' (2013: 5) 'Ethics of Care' framework. This dictated that my ethical decisions were based on care and compassion for my research participants and a motivation to act in a way that benefited the group, rather than adopting universal principles which may not be appropriate for a particular situation.

During the research, I experienced an ethical issue in regard to the illness and subsequent, untimely death of Pastor Tayo aged 49. Within the context of a theological framework that takes seriously divine intervention for healing, Pastor Tayo's death was a source of great devastation and sadness to the church. During the period following his death, I chose not to record services or focus my analysis on any of the discussions in and outside of the church regarding this event. While this material could have elicited interesting data on how a prosperity church deals with the untimely death of their leader and how this was dramatised through the music selections, I felt that it would have been insensitive and opportunistic to do so. In applying the Ethics of Care, (Wiles 2013) I considered firstly my relationship to the church and decided that I did not want to exploit or attempt to gain academic credibility as a result of the seeming problematics of a 'wealth and health' stance; secondly, in applying care and compassion for my respondents, I decided not to use data that emanated from this period. Given that this was not the key focus of the research, to use conversations and sermons from this

period, while the church were dealing with their own feelings of confusion and bewilderment would have been unnecessary and an abuse of trust. Thirdly, while this is not referred to in Wiles' framework I had to also deal with my own feelings of grief and loss, Pastor Tayo was a close friend of my husband (we had attended his wedding a few years previously), and I had enormous respect for his ministry, and therefore to capitalise on his death, would have been a violation of the relationship.

In the next section I will present and justify my theoretical assumptions.

Ethnography

Ethnography was utilised as the research strategy and the most appropriate method of addressing the research objectives. The paucity of material about this subject matter within a UK context is both an asset and a hindrance. Notwithstanding the fact that I had no fixed model to follow, I was able to extrapolate from studies on congregational music in other settings, (Hinson 2000, Lange 2003, McGann 2004, Smith 2004, Ingalls 2008) and the common approach in these studies was the use of ethnography as the project design.

Ethnography is both method and product, in that it involves the collection of various materials resulting in a final artefact (Angrosino 2007). It is commonly adopted by scholars in the fields of religion, ethnomusicology and popular music. However, while viewed by some as the most effective method of understanding a community's belief and practice (Gelder and Thornton 1997, Arweck & Stringer 2002), and the most appropriate mechanism for interrogating musical discourse, (Walser 1993) ethnography is also critiqued for its lack of scientific rigour and notion of subjectivity (Titon 2008). Needless to say, the postmodern turn has halted this idea of so called scientific rigour. It has long been accepted by many that complete objectivity is not possible or indeed desirable.

Willis (1976) argues that the researcher cannot be totally objective, she comes with 'conceptual constructs and ways of seeing the world' (Willis 1976: 248), and data will always be mediated through those lenses. Davidman (2002) argues for the privileging of these lenses by pointing out that access to individual emotional 'truth' can become part of the theoretical framework. Polanyi (1974) on the other hand, bringing his insights as a chemist, interrogates the mantra of scientific rhetoric and argues that even scientists cannot avoid subjective interpretations

'...complete objectivity as usually attributed to the exact sciences is a delusion and is in fact a false ideal' (Polanyi 1974: 80).

All of these approaches recognise that all research is 'situated' and 'partial' (Ali and Kelly 2012). Furthermore, a historical epistemological divide has traditionally existed in the study of religion, citing 'generalizers' and 'particularizers' (Spickard and Landres 2002). The former, by use of large surveys attempting to understand overall trends and patterns, and the latter by focusing on trying to understand why small groups of people engage in particular practices in particular communities. Indeed, both forms of research, qualitative and quantitative are valuable as they ask and answer different types of questions.

Ethnography was adopted because it was the most appropriate way to collect data in this setting. The traditional long commitment and immersion in the field has enabled an observation of participants in a 'natural' setting while writing descriptive detail as a means of understanding symbolic worlds and building theory (Angrosino 2007).

The task of exploring the musical discourse within a religious context must adopt an ontological approach that takes seriously the worldview of its participants as its starting point. What counts as knowledge therefore will be: firstly, the construction of reality as a symbolic discourse; secondly, the reflexive interactions of researcher and researched; and thirdly, the meaning-making processes.

A Sound Ethnography

I have argued in Chapter Two that the auditory and the oral are among the most significant elements of Pentecostalism. It is therefore appropriate to adopt a methodology that emphasises these components. Carter (2004) poses the intriguing question of what differences would be brought to bear if we 'heard' cultures instead of seeing them? (Carter in Erlmann 2004 :59). And despite Clifford's (1986) plea for the ethnographic ear, there still appears to be little explicit work on a systematic approach to the work of the aural in ethnography. Indeed, Wall (2003) argues that a systematic approach to this critical area is yet to be established. The primacy of visualism is well established in ethnography (Bull and Back 2003). Indeed, ethnographers are known as participant 'observers', despite the fact that much of what is recorded as data is aural rather than visual. Forsey (2010) argues that the role of engaged listening needs as much attention as that of observation. While not simply seeking to replace one epistemological dogma with another, his work recognises the need to be more attentive to the ethnographic ear and suggests that much of our work as ethnographers is indeed the recording of the auditory.

Sound perception is no less complicated than visual perception and can be firmly embedded in discursive discourses (Moore 2003). The implications of this are problematic for the ethnographer who need to be attentive to their own prejudices, and mindful of a hearing outside of the box of cultural and ethnic presuppositions and bounded categories. Nevertheless, as already stated, a purely objective analysis is neither desirable nor possible.

The data collection process spanned from 2011 - 2017 and comprised of two key

methods, firstly participant observation and then semi- structured interviews with three target groups and comprised of two phases. The first phase of three years was spent in NWC, and the remaining years of the second phrase carrying out semi-structured interviews and conducting fieldwork in the additional 3 churches as detailed in Chapter 9.

I have attempted a mitigation of a solely subjective rendering of the aural in three ways in the first phase. Firstly, I participated in, and recorded congregational singing in the main service and in house-group settings; secondly, I listened to sermons, casual conversations before and after church, non-church functions and thirdly, I interviewed members of the Praise and Worship team in NWC, and in the second phase, pastors and music industry professionals. This combination of listening, participating in and recording has served to mitigate the dominance of the visual and provided a rich data set to present the musicological features, hear the voices of the respondents and enhance the ethnographic product.

The recording of the auditory has therefore been communicated in three key ways. The first method is the writing of the ethnographic product as demonstrated in Chapter 6. This data was collected through the process of participant observation. After I had secured permission from the leadership to use NWC as my primary case study, I attended the church regularly on Sunday mornings before I started taking detailed field notes. The purpose of this was learn about the church and try to understand its processes and procedures. As well as gaining a familiarity with the music and identifying possible categories for analysis. The grid (Table 1) below shows my process for collecting data in the Sunday services at NWC. I used this sheet to document the timing, the songs and other critical observations. The grid allowed me to identify song selections, patterns,

omissions and musicology elements. Taping the services enabled me to follow up with the detailed musicological analysis presented in Chapter Six.

Table 1 Data Collection Grid NWC

Week 10 21 st August 2011		
Timings	Songs	Observations
Arrived 11.00 Half way through the first song		4 female song leaders, - dressed in peach and khaki Glenn leading. 4 male musicians.
11.05 x 2	'I am a Friend of God' vibrant – up beat, fast song – Israel Tracks words – 'so amazing, so amazing.'	Tim on keys,
	Build up to the chorus, 1, 2, 3 – big flurry into 'I am a Friend of God' the congregation join in total abandon	Pastor Tayo comes out unusually early
	Unaccompanied section – just drums, - the chordal instruments punctuate with stabs on the beat 1, long 4 – brings an anticipation to the music -	
	Repetition of 'He calls me friend' several times. Brings to a big close	The importance of the words and the music – the intensity of the music is matched by the meaning of the words. The significance of 'I am a Friend of God' is reflected by the volume and the chord progression. Here is the sense that the words cannot be separated from the words – meaning is contained in the Word even though the music communicates a

		meaning of its own. Consider also in this regard the words that the music is couched in. The Praise and Worship leader always speaks.
11.09	Glenn says, 'Just shout out 'Hallelujah to the Lord. Lord we love you so much... you are a good God and your mercies endureth for ever'. Half way through Glenn's speaking the keyboard starts playing a new song	
	'I'm going to teach you guys I song that I wrote when I was sweeping at my aunt's house...you know just worshipping.... you can worship at your job, anywhere you are, you don't have to be in church to worship.... just these words came as I was sweeping, sweeping with a smile on my face....it goes like this.	Since starting the fieldwork this is the first time that I've heard a song written by a member of the congregation. Sign of the local perhaps. It's a very simple song, in the style of CCM Pastor Tayo sits at the front on a high chair facing the congregation. A table is bought out, instead of the usual pulpit. Clearly, he is no longer able to stand. This is explained later in the service.
11.17	Starts singing: 'He is a good God, yes he is' repeats several times Slow reflective song, mediation 'It's a real simple song, so simple, but real powerful, sing with me'	
		The auditorium is dark, only the stage is lit. Feedback occurs throughout this song – Praise and Worship team are unperturbed by this.
		Welcome card projected is filled in as Barak O'bama Black House. Deliberate misspelling. Expressively Black, racial

		references, playful.
11.23	<p>Glenn tracks the song Long slow strings 'Say it again – He is a good God' 'One more time – say he is a good God' Sings song again Moves into and 'Great and mighty is our God' – I'm not sure whether this is a new song or part of Glenn's song. Leads into 'Jesus you be lifted higher' More energy – more intensity Unaccompanied – just drums 'Let our King be lifted up' – repeated several times. Pastor Tayo joins the singing: 'We lift you up Lord...He is worthy ...we worship you...be lifted higher.... speaks in tongues – half singing, half speaking. We worship you, we honour, be lifted higher Lord, be lifted higher Lord</p>	<p>Spiritual Transaction – offering, money is your life, breathing your life into this church, helping to touch the lives of others</p> <p>Repetition in music is a common occurrence</p>
11.27	<p>Prays in normal speaking voice – keyboards carry on playing in the background.</p> <p>Lights on</p> <p>Claps at the end of prayer – carries on in praise mode. Shouts let our King be lifted up Dominion Mandate is recited by the whole congregation Claps, shouts at the end of Dominion Mandate– Pastor Tayo says 'Oh you can do better than that, come on, 'There is power in your words by the way you make this confession, you are declaring your reality, are you are declaring the future you prefer, regardless of what your presence circumstances are – Just keep saying it: I have dominion, I have dominion, I</p>	<p>Evidence of the power of the word in prosperity theology.</p>

	<p>have dominion, the enemy may be battering you on every side, everything may be crumbling around you, keep saying it, I have dominion and the words that you speak will prevail, come on give God a clap of praise one more time. Before you take your seats, turn to your neighbour and say, I believe that you have dominion, I really do.</p> <p>Pastor Tayo says: 'Please help me appreciate Glenn and his team this morning.' Congregation applaud and cheer loudly.</p>	<p>Appreciation is a common theme</p>
11.35		<p>Tayo asks for permission to sit to preach. He says, 'I've made a covenant with God, as long as He gives me breath, I will preach...if they have to roll me in on a bed to preach, and I can preach, I will'...laughs heartily with the congregation....'The devil doesn't know what to do with a man who doesn't give up...the devil has a migraine....after he has thrown his best at you, you keep going, you keep going....congregation clap and cheer...and I hope that my life is preaching to you... I hope that my life is preaching to you...I hope that you understand that regardless of what you are facing, you must keep your eyes focused on Jesus. So the next time you have a flat tyre and you refuse to come to church, just recognise that Pastor Tayo's problem is more serious than a flat tyre...you have no excuse...I have lost my job, I'm not going to worship God anymoreyou have no excuse...blessed be the name of the Lord, it's at you I'm sitting down .different perspective looking'.</p>

		<p>Feedback is given on the community outreach that took place on the previous day.</p> <p>38 people went out</p> <p>152 people were ministered to in community outreach,</p> <p>12 people became Christians</p> <p>Importance of numbers.</p>
		<p>Financial Empowerment Workshop is advertised</p> <p>Chronicle Exchange once a month– exchange items for free. Business network</p> <p>More white people today – I counted about 10. Could be because of baby dedication – 4 babies were dedicated.</p> <p>Preaching on 4 lifestyle features</p>
		<p>At end of the services gives information about losing out on the Bingo Hall to Christ Tabernacle Apostle Alfred Williams. Gives very detailed coverage of the process. Pastor Tayo asks church to treat the new neighbours with love, and not to fight over parking spaces. I felt that the whole thing was treated with dignity and appropriateness. Spent a long time after church talking to Judith. Most social day so far.</p>

The second method that has been used is demonstrated in Chapter Six where I communicated the immanent features of the songs sung in the service in April 2012 via the means of a graphic chart which I have designed to communicate as precisely as

possible the musicological features of the melody. This colour coded chart used in conjunction with the enclosed CD will allow the reader to *hear* as well as see the melodic profile of the songs under discussion. I then go on to analyse the musical meaning contained within this material. This process allows me to communicate musical ideas in a non-technical manner. As noted in Chapter Two, a number of writers pay homage to the importance of music within Pentecostal settings, but few undertake a detailed analysis of the musicological materials. This approach helps to provide a simple method to communicate musical material. Furthermore, the inclusion of the sound file enables direct access to the sound world of NWC via the auditory channel. While I have attempted to convey the atmosphere, the energy and the emotion of the sensory field via the ethnography product, I am aware of the partiality of words. As noted in the commonly quoted maxim 'writing about music is like dancing about architecture'

(<http://quoteinvestigator.com/2010/11/08/writing-about-music/>).

The graphic chart, which will be described in more detail in Chapter Six will serve to graphically portray the objective elements of the melodic profile.

The third method was semi-structured interviews carried out with three target groups. (See details in Appendix)

Group 1: Members of the Praise and Worship team at NWC. Interviews ranged from an hour to two hours. This group's input was important in trying to understand the musical story in the church, and the management processes. This material is mainly included in Chapter Seven, but relevant input has also been used elsewhere.

Group 2: Pastors/leaders of the churches where the second phase of the fieldwork took place.

The interviews with Pastor Claion and Apostle Williams ranged from 30 minutes to an hour. The leader from the RCCG church requested anonymity and sent an email response to the interview questions. The aim in these interviews was to provide background information, identify management systems and processes of change. This material is included in Chapter Eight.

Group 3: Music Industry Experts included:

Ten interviews were conducted in total ranging from 40 minutes to one and half hours to provide a context and background in an area where there is a paucity of written documentation. During the course of the interviews, respondents were asked a range of questions about their experience of congregational music in BMCs and their thoughts in relation to the significance of the Praise and Worship industry. This material is included in Chapter, One, Seven and Eight.

The gospel music experts span 15 – 40 years' work in the UK Christian music industry and come from a variety of Pentecostal BMCs, both African and Caribbean. The exceptions to this were Paul Lee, who although Caribbean was at the time of interview was Assistant to the President of the Seventh Day Adventist church which whilst non-Pentecostal is categorized as a BMC in the UK. And Les Moir and Chris Williams, both white and grew up in the Salvation Army church and New Frontiers Church respectively. They were interviewed for their perspectives on the mainstream Christian music industry.

These 'guided conversations' (Lofland & Lofland 1995: 85), allowed for the collection of in-depth and flexible data (O'Leary 2014). Respondents were keen to talk about their experiences, especially many of the veterans of the Black British music industry who

were aware of the deficit in terms of a history of Black church music in the UK. This process allowed respondents to 'speak in their own voices and with their own language' (Byrne in Seale 2012: 209). Byrne notes that this is a good method for recording communities whose voices have rarely been heard. I am mindful of Titon's (2003) critique of Geertz's (1973) thick description as a one-sided account that disregards informants' analysis of their own music. The use of semi constructed interviews with a range of different stakeholders assisted in 'thickening' the research and mitigates some of these difficulties. Hinson (2000) also underlines the centrality of personal stories and experiential testimony in researching ideas pertaining to Pentecostal belief. The data collected from the interviews enabled the respondent to 'speak for themselves' and also contributed to the construction of narrative in a field where there is a lack of published material. Referencing Nattiez's (1990) Music Discourse these respondents can be identified as producers given their roles within either congregations or the music industry. However, as church members for many years, they can also be classified as Nattiez's receivers.

This process of data collection enabled an interrogation of the music discourse from several different vantage points. Firstly, exploring the music in its context; secondly, understanding the music from the point of view of the people engaged in its production; thirdly understanding broader industry influences on the music; and finally comparing the discourse to other BMCs in the area.

I started the research with a relatively open brief to explore the musical discourse of NWC. My intention at the start, was the concentration on a single case study. However, fairly early on in the research, it became apparent that the song selections of choice reflected the global music industry and not repertoires reflective of the ethnic heritage of the church. It was at this stage that I decided on a second phase of the research. The aim

of this phase was to identify whether churches adopted a similar repertoire to NWC, or whether there was more material that could be described as local to the various congregations. For this final segment, I undertook participant observation at another three BMCs in Woolwich as a means of comparison.

I was also interested to ascertain whether these churches promulgated a belief in prosperity gospel given its seeming popularity in neo-Pentecostal churches, and also to track any changes that had taken place with their music over the years. Limitations of time and resource did not allow me to capture all of the aspects of the musical discourse that had taken place at NWC. Nonetheless, this phase of the research was critical in providing generalisations and empirical evidence of an adherence to the global Christian music industry. The following grid (Table 2) was used for this data collection process.

Table 2: Data Collection Grid Other Churches

Date of Visit	2nd August 2015
Name/Denomination	Chrisma New Testament Church of God
No. in congregation	Around 100
Demographic	All Black, mainly elderly females wearing hats. Young people, either very young or teenagers. Very few people in 20- 30 age gap.
Interior decor	Tasteful. Matching chairs and carpet. Cross on wall. Some areas in need of repair.
Style and type of songs	A good mix of the popular with one hymn and a simple calypso chorus.
Repetition	Choruses repeated several times, as well as individual lines.
Quality of musicianship	High. They are all very fluent, and familiar with Black church troupes. Able to follow the Praise and Worship leader effortlessly
Composition of band/song leaders	All male, over 30. Appear to be older than NWC.
Use of technology	Data projector, Twitter, Facebook. Prayer What's App group
Songs sung in service	Christ is enough for me Every praise to our God Standing on the promises I give myself away

	Lord I think you There is a healer in the house Our God is greater.
Interesting phrases	'Sometimes we worry about how we are going to pay the bills.'
References to prosperity	'Offering time, blessing time'
References to Black church	Happy Birthday Stevie Wonder style. I have noted that this is the version of choice in BMCs.
Other	Thriving Sunday School. Lunch for homeless people. Family atmosphere, congregational members referred to by first name by the pastor.
Similarity to NWC	Repertoire. Style of music and interaction.
Difference to NWC	Praise and Worship team and musicians older, not in colour coordinated dress. Freer, in the delivery of the songs, it didn't sound as if they were sticking to a prescribed list. There were occasions when the Praise and Worship leader started singing, and the musicians followed.

This allowed me to think about the elements that the other three churches had in common and the things that were different. It also gave me an insider view of a BMC; this type of ethnographic research is limited in much of the literature available on UK BMCs. This differed from the first grid, insofar as the focus here was on the repertoire and the mode of engagement with the music in the service.

Theoretical Ideas

The theoretical ideas that underpin my approach to a musical analysis are informed by firstly, music semiology and secondly, critical discourse analysis, (CDA). Both epistemological frameworks recognise music as a discourse that can be analysed in a similar way to language. In this section, I will discuss how these ideas have been applied in this project.

Semiology has frequently been used as a method to assess and understand meaning in cultural practice. Nattiez's (1990) model however, eschews the early appropriation of

semiology in regard to popular music observed in the field of cultural studies in the Birmingham Centre for Cultural Studies. While the work of theorists such as Hall & Jefferson (1976), Willis (1978), Hebdige (1979), is significant insofar as it recognises the potential for sifting semiotic value from everyday cultural artefacts and aligning these in a deterministic manner to social and political concerns. Shepherd and Wicke (1997: 9) are critical of the content analysis approach to music which attempts to decipher and extract meaning from lyrics and objects alone, without a detailed reference to sounds. They argue that this does a great disservice to the essential nature of music maintaining that, music may indeed carry many meanings, some of which may be contradictory, and cultural studies cannot do justice to this. In this instance music becomes an 'empty sign' because unlike language 'it is not burdened by the conventions of the traditional association between signifiers and signified' (Shepherd and Wicke 1997:20). This stand-off between sociologists' interest in cultural processes, and musicologists' focus on the 'music itself' is addressed in Nattiez's (1990) semiology which marries the material, the symbolic and the users.

Therefore, for the purposes of this study, in a similar way to Evan's (2006) analysis of congregational music, I have adapted Nattiez's (1990) model to relate to my specific context of analysing the music discourse of an African Pentecostal church specifically, and BMCs in general. In so doing, I am addressing Ingalls' (2008) critique that Praise and Worship music is either studied as simple folk music or seen through the lens of the Frankfurt School as mass culture. Neither of these approaches takes account of the lyrics, sounds or participants. Nattiez's (1990) tripartite method of interrogating the immanent, poietic, and esthetic elements of the 'total musical fact' is a helpful tool in structuring my analysis. Unlike the traditional musicological approach, it does not view the musical work as absolute, replete with universal narratives bearing no relationship to history, culture, social context or users. This interpretation understands that what is

named as music is brought into being by three interrelated elements. This is of particular significance in a context where the type and style of music carries social, cultural and theological underpinnings. It also recognizes that the 'self' of music in a congregational context is brought into being by fans, listeners, congregants, pastors, Praise and Worship teams, music industry structures etc. who all participate in the musical processes and activities. Nattiez (1990) acknowledges the difficulties of appending purely linguistic meanings to music and defines the process of meaning as relating to a lived experience. He sees semiology not as a science of communication, but rather as a process of 'referring' to symbolic forms. Hence the traditional behaviourist model of *producer – message – receiver* is superseded by a more complex process of reception and recreation similar to Hall's (1980) encoding and decoding model implying that the musical work is subject to a host of interpretations. In a context where music is simultaneously fulfilling spiritual, aesthetic, cultural, economic functions and has personal and corporate affects and effects, such an approach is critical. While Nattiez's (1990) work is shrouded in abstract musicological theorising, he does acknowledge that the untangling of the parameters must be assessed by the process of an ethnography. In a context where multiple meanings can be attributed to the musical text, it is necessary to see, hear and participate in the musical activity. As stated by Walser,

'...there can be no meaningful semiology apart from ethnographic inquiry' (Walser 1993: 31).

Ethnography side-steps a musicological structuralist analysis that may analyse musical sound without reference to context. Nattiez (1989) disputes the epistemological stand-off asserted by structuralists and ethnomusicologists as exemplified by Blacking's (1976) view of music as a cultural symbol and presents the case for the compatibility of the two systems. Indeed, as argued by DeNora (2000), the multi-disciplinary *modus operandi* offered by ethnography attempts to explore the gap between structure and feeling, assessing what the sounds mean to listeners themselves. The use of ethnography can

attempt to map a timetable of engagement (Frith 2003 cited in Clayton et al) meaning that I saw why, how and where the music was used in services and therefore understood its role as a tool of mediation in religious settings.

Critical Discourse Analysis

CDA more usually appropriated to the interrogation of speech, written documents, observations and images, understands that language is not simply reflective of our reality, but constructs and shapes our reality. Forms of subjectivity and social practice are constituted by forms of knowledge production generated through speech and text. Foucault's (1961, 1976, 1984) authoritative works on sexuality and mental illness clearly define how specialist language is used as a power enforcing mechanism that demarcate categories of specialism enabling participation, exclusion and affirming authority. According to Foucault, people in power use 'normalizing discourses' to make deviant the other. We are bound and controlled by the discourses contained in language. He states:

'... that in every society the production of discourse is at once controlled, selected, organised and redistributed by a certain number of procedures whose role is to ward off its powers and dangers, to gain mastery over its chance events, to evade its ponderous, formidable materiality' (Foucault 1981: 52).

Foucault (1981) here is referring to speech acts, and selections and prohibitions in sexuality and politics. However, discourse analysis is widely influential in a number of disciplinary fields including sociology, media, social policy, health, education, and management (Tonkiss 2012 in Seale). Described by van Dijk (2008) as a 'movement' encompassing differing methodologies and epistemologies, discourse analysis is concerned with social practice and the operations of power.

The study of music is a marginal concern in the area of CDA (van Leeuwen 2012).

However, a few popular music scholars have described music as a discourse, and in recent years have applied CDA as a means of understanding and interrogating musical meaning (Machin 2010, van Leeuwen 2012, Graakjaer 2012). In a similar way to Nattiez (1990) they explore the discourse of the 'music itself' as a language, while at the same time acknowledging that music, like language, carries shared meanings and conventions within particular contexts. However, unlike Nattiez (1990) they analyse how music interacts with other semiotic resources to produce meaning.

Walser (1993) in his seminal text on heavy metal explores meaning inscribed in heavy metal music, by undertaking an in-depth analysis of the music, the fans and the context. More recent work in an edition of the journal 'Critical Discourse Studies' (2012) dedicated to music included a range of analysis on the use of music in various settings to encapsulate various ideologies and values to support and subvert power relations. Examples include Graakjaer (2012) who demonstrates how various semiotic resources of music, lyrics, assistant behaviour, smell, creates a dream-like state, engendering consumerism for users in an Abercrombie and Fitch shop. Machin and Richardson (2012) use two pieces of music adopted by pre-1945 European fascist movements to show how ideology and values are communicated through music, lyrics and timbre. Power, Dillane & Devereux (2012) explore how counter hegemonic narratives are deployed through the lyrics, visual and performance techniques of the Morrissey song – 'Interesting Drug'. This material is significant in that it demonstrates unequivocally that music as text, in performance and in context mediates values, ideologies, and can impact on behaviour. CDA therefore is the framework that aims to uncover and reveal hidden ideologies and a multimodal analysis has been used as the tool to carry out this task.

Multimodal Analysis

This multimodal approach recognises a diversity of signs in an environment and therefore importance of understanding how signs work in concert with other signs in order to sift the 'meaning potential.' Discourses maybe light hearted or present a common-sense view of the world, nonetheless they communicate interests, ideologies and identities and as such have enormous power. As noted in Chapter Two, previous research on Pentecostalism and prosperity gospel has focused on the visual aspects and the power of the media to construct religious identities. My approach has been to consider how the visual might work in combination with the sounds. I am therefore, trying to ascertain what a description of the building alongside an analysis of the songs in the building might reveal about Black neo-Pentecostalism in London. Machin states that

'.... music is used....to give things salience, to fill spaces, to create meanings to settings, people and events' Machin 2010: 9).

A multimodal semiotic approach enables an interrogation of the spaces, settings and worldviews, alongside an analysis of the sounds in order to understand the multiplicity of meanings contained.

This approach however, is not to suggest that musical meaning is fixed and immovable. Kramer (2002) suggests that music contains contradictory tendencies and in order to understand music we need a 'bifocality of perspective'. That is, 'insider knowledge and empathy to understand' (Walser 2003: 38 in Moore), its power and emotive affect, as well as the outsider critical stance and historical perspective to locate and explain its power in wider context, meaning both emic and etic approaches. Green's (1988) approach is helpful in this regard. She identifies inherent and delineated musical meanings. Inherent musical meanings are our conscious subjective interactions with music as listeners. These temporal musical experiences, mediated through time, confer meaning via the process of reference to the musical material. Delineated meanings, on the other hand,

are the social, historical, economic values conferred by the market and other spheres of influence. Therefore, the subjective meanings are understood by collective definitions communicated via social messages, but do not necessarily dictate them. Such an approach acknowledges that listeners, fans and participants in musical processes may be unwittingly caught up in the production-exchange, consumption commodification chain, but music engages with the conscious self. In short, music is both autonomous and has the capacity to hold polysemic meanings for varieties of users. Kramer expresses it thus:

'...musical meaning consists of a specific, mutual interplay between musical experience and its contexts; the form taken by this process is the production of modes or models of subjectivity carried by the music into the listener's sense of self; and the dynamics of this production consists of a renegotiation of the subject's position(s) between the historically contingent forms of experience and the experience of a transcendental perspective that claims to subsume (but is actually subsumed by them)' (Kramer 2002: 8).

This position avoids the dogma of some approaches and holds in tension the dialectic between the 'thing in itself' and its polysemic meaning-making potential for diverse users. So, while I would agree that structuralist one to one association of musical elements to extra musical elements (Tunstall in Scott 2000) are limited, it is my contention that when context, experience, historical and theological meanings (Kramer's (2002) reference to a transcendental perspective is of relevance in regard to congregational music) are brought to bear on the interaction, presentation and understanding of musical activity 'meaning potential' van Leeuwen (1999: 10) can be sourced from the musical product. CDA provides the language and multimodal analysis provides the tools to enable a thorough interrogation that maps the 'musical composition as social reality' (DeNora:1995: 298).

Therefore, in this project, using Nattiez (1990) threefold paradigm and CDA alongside a multimodal analysis I have explored the music, the producers and the receivers based on a single case study of a BMC in South London and followed this up with supplementary

data collection process from another three BMCs in the same area.

Conclusion

In this chapter I began by outlining my positionality through the project. I argue that my unique combination of skills, and experience, namely my identity, ethnicity, musical training, faith, research skills and theoretical understanding led to a rich and deep analysis of music in BMC environments. Using musical language, I discuss my reflexivity in the project and describe how various challenges were navigated. Rationalising the theoretical frameworks, I justify the use of ethnography as the central tool to the research design and foreground the role of sound in the data collection process. This approach is critical to the project, because, as argued in Chapter Two, sound is a predominant feature of Pentecostalism, and a lot of time was spent in the field, listening. I go on to outline the frameworks that have informed the study which include Nattiez's musical discourse which is used as a means of structuring; CDA which aims to cover and reveal power structures and finally multimodal analysis which enabled a combination of visual and musicological exploration. In the next chapter, I will describe the background and the theology of my primary case study.

CHAPTER FOUR

PROSPERITY IN WOOLWICH

In this chapter, I will discuss the context for my primary case study NWC, Woolwich. It is important to appreciate the socio-geo context and understand the location of the church in regard to the development of African Pentecostalism in London. I also outline the activities of the church and briefly discuss how they situate themselves on the local/global paradigm. The final section of the chapter presents an account of how prosperity gospel is communicated through various facets of the church's non-musical and oral activities.

The Broad Context

The location of the Royal London Borough Greenwich for this study's fieldwork illustrates the proliferation and growth of African Pentecostalism in London's increasingly gentrified and sometimes turbulent towns. Greenwich, like many London boroughs, epitomises gentrifications with high-priced houses, expensive coffee shops, juxtaposed with visible signs of social inequality and the changing face of multicultural Britain. Home to the principal axis as 'the centre of world time' (Frampton 1999: 5) designated by Prime Meridian and Greenwich Mean Time. This former industrial landscape placed side by side with green open spaces is well known for the Cutty Sark, the Maritime Museum and a plethora of other historical monuments. Additionally, as part of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations in 2012, the borough was awarded 'royal' status due to its historical links.

However, Woolwich in Greenwich, where all of the churches in the research are based is described as a forgotten town (<http://buzz.bournemouth.ac.uk/2013/03/the-regeneration-of-londons-forgotten-town-woolwich-2/>). This ethnically diverse locale⁴³ is equally infamous as location to one of the 2011 London riots following the police shooting of Mark Duggan and prior to that incident, two high profile murders. 1993 saw the brutal stabbing of Stephen Lawrence⁴⁴ described in the Macpherson Report as:

‘an affront both to society and especially to the local Black community’ (Macpherson 1999: 19).

More recently in 2013 the public stabbing of Royal Fusilier Lee Rigby by Michael Adebolayo and Michael Adebowale to avenge Muslims killed by the British armed forces shocked many. These two incidents indicate the potential racial and religious volatility that could exist in the borough.

Woolwich also ranks as one of the poorer neighbourhoods in the Greenwich with attendant social problems. Characterized by overcrowded households with, according to the 2011 census:

(http://www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/info/200088/statistics_and_census_information/114/population_data/2) a bedroom occupancy of -1 or less 11,247. While this is 11.1% lower than the London average it is double the national average. Additionally, 34.3% of residents live in social housing and one fifth of the population aged 16 plus have no qualifications, the sixth highest in London.

⁴³ Woolwich was also the location of the opening of the first McDonald's fast food restaurant in the UK on 12th October 1974. This location was chosen because it had the ‘population mix that they were looking for.’ (Ludlow & Watson 1999: 4). One can only assume that the company were looking to target working and middle-class people with young families interested in purchasing their products.

⁴⁴ Stephen Lawrence was an aspiring young Black architect who was stabbed to death by a group of racist youths on 22nd April 1993. The murder, subsequent police inquiry and initial lack of a conviction resulted in a far-reaching societal impact on the police service, public institutions and UK society at large. The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry ordered by the then Home Secretary Jack Straw, identified 70 different recommendations covering a diverse range of areas including police recruitment and retention, training in racism awareness and valuing cultural diversity, family liaison, police practice and the investigations of racist crimes, and definition of a racist incident inter alia, concluded that the Black community's perception that the police service was ‘institutionally racist’ was a correct one (Macpherson 1999).

Woolwich Common, the area in which all of the churches were located has a young population with an average age of 30. 56. 5% of the population are born in England, 8.7% in Nigeria; 2.7% India, and 1.2% in Jamaica (<http://woolwich-common.localstats.co.uk/census-demographics/england/london/greenwich/woolwich-common>).

Woolwich has the 4th largest Black African population in the UK (www.greenwichseniorrecruitment.com/about-royal-borough-greenwich), numbering some 35,164, equalling 13.8% of the borough. Between 2001-2011 the population of the borough grew by approximately 40,000, this was the largest growth since 1911-1921, and half of this number 19,852 were Black African. The white population experienced a 12% decrease, evidence perhaps of a 'white flight' from the area. This changed from 87.3% in 1991 to 62.5% in 2011 and corresponded with an increase of 1.9% in 1991 to 13.8% in 2011 in the Black African population. These factors make this geographic location an excellent site for the research. The migratory patterns and subsequent growth in the West African population has had a direct impact on the increase of BMCs in the area. This relationship confirms research in other areas where scholars have identified the support networks, spiritual and psychological props that BMCs can provide for newly arrived immigrants (Ter Haar 1998, Hunt 2001, Ugba 2009, Maier 2011, Adedibu 2012, Adogame 2013), in sometimes negative and dehumanizing circumstances in the inner cities. However, as outlined in a previous chapter, none of these authors have analysed in a systematic and detailed manner the congregation singing and the musical discourse that takes place in these congregation. An analysis of the music in these congregations will not only extend what we know about their social and cultural engagement but provide greater insight on their song repertoires and their relationships to local and global networks.

The Specific Context

NWC is one of a number of West African Pentecostal churches in the UK falling under the designate of 'mega'. The term is described by the Hartford Institute for Religion Research as any church with a membership of over 2,000 people (<http://hirr.hartsem.edu/megachurch/definition.html>). These types of churches have been a growing feature on the UK religious landscape for a number of years (Adedibu 2012), and it is significant that churches described as such in Europe are led by Nigerian ministers. Namely, Kingsway International Christian Centre (KICC)⁴⁵ by Matthew Ashimolowo, with a membership of 12,000 cited as the biggest church in Western Europe (Olofinjana 2010) and Sunday Adelaja in the Ukraine with a church of some 25,000 members. This church, Embassy of God is cited as the biggest church in Eastern Europe (Olofinjana 2010) and described by Adedibu as:

'an exceptional success story of cross cultural ministry by missionaries from the Global South' (Adedibu (2013: 406).

Other mega churches in London include Redeemed Christian Church of God⁴⁶ (RCCG), with more than 375 churches in the UK and Glory House founded by Albert and Vincent Odulele in 1993, boasting some 3,000 members. Notwithstanding the difficulties of confirming the veracity of membership numbers, and differences in accounting processes which in some cases refer to weekly attendance and in others, numbers of people at a single service, (Goh 2008: 4) it is nonetheless clear that West African Churches in a very short time span have witnessed a phenomenal rate of growth in the UK where church membership amongst the indigenous population is on the decline. The reason for the growth of these churches appear to be two-fold. On the one hand, it seems to confirm Adogame's (2010) assertion in his intriguingly titled article 'How God became a Nigerian'

⁴⁵ See footnote 56

⁴⁶ RCCG hold an annual festival at the Docklands Excel called The Festival of Life centre attracting some 40,000 people

that religion is Nigeria's second largest cultural export. However, it also affirms that as a result of immigration to inner city areas, congregants want a distinct brand of Christianity (Adedibu 2012). Regardless of the reason for growth, NWC in this context would be identified as 'mega church' pastored by a Nigerian minister boasting a congregation of around 2,000 people spread across their two morning services on most Sundays of the year. This undoubtedly, one of the largest gatherings of Christian worship in the Woolwich area on a weekly basis.

Background to NWC

Osgood's (2006) paradigm for the five phases of church planting of neo-Pentecostal African Christian helps to situate NWC in the wider context of African Christianity in the UK.

There are as follows:

1. 1970s – 'constrained to plant' – professional Africans meeting for prayer and Bible Study.
2. Mid 1980s – 'sent to plant' – neo-Pentecostal churches developing churches in UK.
3. Late 1980s – 1990s – 'transferred to plant'. Leaders who were sent to set up independent churches.
4. Late 1980s and 1990s - 'trained to plant'. African leaders planting churches on graduation from UK colleges.
5. Mid 1990s 'called to plant'. African leaders based in UK set up independent churches.

The genesis of NWC conforms with Osgood's (2006) fifth phrase, which he calls the most

entrepreneurial, which is certainly the case with NWC, demonstrated by the business enterprise which is encouraged in the church. This fifth phrase also coheres with Sturge's (2005: 98) 'diverse church' (1980-1993) which as well as being a period of the development for the African mega churches mentioned above, it was also a fruitful time for UK Black gospel, coming to national prominence. This locates the opening of the church within the same historical time frame as the period described in Chapter One.

In Osgood's (2006) 'called to plant' phrase he identifies many African leaders who came to the UK with the intention of engaging in secular work but found themselves starting churches. Dr Tayo Adeyemi, founder and pastor of NWC falls into this category. Although born in Leeds in 1964 to Nigerian parents, he spent his formative years in Nigeria where he was educated and graduated as a medical doctor. As a student, Pastor Tayo began to demonstrate his talent and leadership qualities in motivating and galvanising people in the Christian faith. He founded a student fellowship which grew to over 3,000 students across 30 Nigerian Universities and also started three chapters of the Full Gospel Businessmen Fellowship (FGBF) (<http://www.newwine.co.uk/church/our-pastor>). FGBF were a group of successful professionals who engaged in networking for the purposes of mutual fellowship, discipleship and evangelism (Yong 2012 in Attanasi and Yong). Pastor Tayo returned to the UK in 1989 with the intention of pursuing a residency in surgery specialising in neurosurgery. It was his intention to return to Nigeria to start a neurosurgery teaching facility. However, he received a call to the ministry and struggled with this for a few years before he started NWC. The church started as a small prayer meeting of eight people in 1993 and in a short space of time outgrew its premises and moved to the West Greenwich Community and Arts Centre. Within a seven-year period by 2000, the church had moved to its current building, the Woolwich Coronet, a Grade 2 listed building on the corner of John Wilson St, near the Woolwich Ferry. The rapid growth of the church, generated by the migratory patterns as described earlier, and the

move to a building of some historical and community significance gave Pastor Tayo the perfect environment in which to demonstrate his leadership skills and spiritual insight.

Church Structure and Activities

NWC is a thriving and busy church with a highly organised and stratified body with eight full time employees. During the period of fieldwork collection, Pastor Tayo presided as the senior pastor, working alongside Pastor Michael Olawore, who now runs the church following the death of Pastor Tayo in 2013. At the time, Pastor Michael occupied the role of executive minister/deputy pastor. The two ministers were assisted by a board of ministers who in turn were responsible for areas within seven portfolios comprising of Administration/Events/Mission, Business, External Affairs, Membership/Training, Outreach, Support Services and Executive. Under this structure there were 33 teams, composed of 293 volunteer workers in the church and each team comprised a team leader, a deputy and various workers responsible for a range of activities. This highly developed organisational structure reflected the order and precision that undergirds all operational activities in the church.

The teams exist to execute the church's mission statement which is to

'...discover, develop and deploy the gifts, treasures and potentials... and to be maximally effective in what God has called you to do' (www.newwine.co.uk/church/mission).

This individualized project can be expressed personally, locally and globally in the following activities. Individuals were encouraged to avail themselves of...

Taking up membership.

Enrolling on the New Life programme for recent converts.

Attending Believer's College - the church's internal Bible college.

Engaging in some aspects of leadership in the church.

The local was expressed in the following activities:

Christmas Hamper donation (In 2013, 23, 000 hampers worth £25.00 each were given to low income families in the locality).

John Wilson Pantry - Breakfast club for homeless people.

Summer holiday clubs.

Senior citizens' clubs.

Civic engagement and ecumenical relations - seat on the ecumenical group.

Membership of local police authority.

National Initiatives

Financial and business workshops.

Prison ministries.

Global Initiatives

Built and ongoing maintenance of housing estate in India for people with leprosy.

TV and radio broadcasts.

Online and live broadcasts.

Wine press - church magazine.

Branches in Nigeria, USA, Indian, South Africa, Papua New Guinea.

As well as the usual Sunday services (2 on Sunday morning), and mid-week meetings (Wednesday and Friday), youth service weekly cell groups, men's and women's ministries, the church adopted a holistic approach in providing services that cater to all aspects of life offering professional development, career building, financial empowerment, marriage preparation, family workshops, over 50s club, education clubs etc.

This is evident in the programme of local and national initiatives work offered by the church. In a membership meeting in 2016, Pastor Michael talked about the church's plans to develop a building project consisting of 26 flats, TV, radio and music studios, a bookshop, a cafe, an art gallery, a day care centre and a school. He pointed out that music and recording were central to this particular vision confirming the importance of the art form in this environment.

NWC although not actively involved with local politics is highly regarded by the local authority. During the period of research, the church held political hustings and had regular meetings with local councillors and politicians.

According to Adedibu (2012) one of the key contributions made to UK society from BMCs is their social initiatives from both churches and non-governmental organisations in areas of social deprivation. This is evident in the work that NWC are engaged in, and the enormous contribution of voluntary labour that is committed to the local area and to the church. This diverse range of activity demonstrate how the church self-identified along the global/local paradigm. And while they adopt a relatively apolitical stance, they viewed themselves as major players within the local community demonstrated by regular invites to the Mayor to high profile events. This was juxtaposed by their global activity of annually opening branches in various overseas domains; regular mission trips and invites to a range of speakers from USA, Nigeria, India and Europe.

Theological Affiliations

The theological affiliations of NWC are typical of many UK BMC Pentecostal churches. The tenets of faith largely follow Bebbington's quadrilateral of evangelical religion of

biblicism, crucicentrism, conversionism and activism (Bebbington 1989: 3). Biblicism was witnessed in the church's emphasis on the use of the Bible and a belief in its inerrancy. As stated in the Chronicle, (the church's weekly newsletter) dated Sunday 08 September 2013:

'As Christians, we have to embrace and cherish the Word. Give it a place of priority in your life. If you begin anything without the Word it is doomed to fail.'

The Bible was read publicly in all services, with the congregation being asked to stand as a mark of respect.

At NWC there was an adherence to the traditional teaching on the Crucicentrism, that is teaching about the crucifixion of Christ, although there was little focus on this during the time of the research.

Conversionism was a key activity of NWC. An 'appeal' for people to commit their lives to Christ was given at the end of every Sunday service, as well as in monthly outreach meeting held in the local town centre.

Activism was demonstrated by engagement in local projects as noted above. A commitment to the poor was an important component of the work undertaken by the church.

Added to this is an adherence to classical Pentecostalism exemplified in their mission statement by a belief in baptism in the Holy Spirit and the subsequent ability to speak in tongues.

However, the central focus in the church's teaching was an emphasis on prosperity teaching. In the next section, I will demonstrate how this belief system was played out in

the life of the church. Using Bowler's (2013) model of hard and soft prosperity I will identify how a hard prosperity is evident in documents, declarations and sermons. This analysis will demonstrate the dominance of the doctrine in the church, but also seeks to set out the context within which the musical discourse resides.

Prosperity within the context of a church

'The church I see is a financially prosperous church, where it is commonplace to see people of substance and wealth. It is a church that has at least 70 millionaires and twelve billionaires, who understand that the real purpose of wealth is to establish God's covenant in the earth. It's a church where members are financially responsible and are bountiful and liberal givers. A church whose members are the head and not the tail- champions and leaders in their fields of endeavour; and breaking new grounds in the arts and in science and technology'.

Pastor Tayo: The Church I See (<http://www.newwine.co.uk/church/the-church-i-see>).

The extract above is from a commentary entitled 'The Church I See', written by the founding minister, Pastor Tayo in July 2013. This three-page document posted on the church's website, operates as a type of vision statement and is important in helping to frame the ambition and theological convictions of the leadership of the church. Pastor Tayo's statement, no doubt influenced, by an earlier statement written by Brian Houston of the Hillsong Church referred to in Chapter Three. Houston wrote two vision statements, the first in 1993 and the second in 2014 (<https://hillsong.com/vision/>). Like the NWC statement, Houston refers to the influence and size of the church. He talks about the use of the media as a tool for mission and unsurprisingly, given the church's prominence in the global Christian music industry, he also refers to the importance of 'powerful songs of faith and hope'. The second statement in 2014 is longer and mentions similar areas, but here there is a greater juxtaposition between the global and the local, as well as a more explicit explication on the songs stating that there should be a 'distinct sound' which is contagious in creating music for the nations, referencing the global ambition of the church.

Pastor Tayo's piece by contrast, is much longer and uses colourful, poetic imagery and metaphor and invites the reader on a journey where he paints an idealized picture of the type of church he envisages for NWC. He evokes a spiritual, social and economic community fully operational and active in all spheres of society, describing a mega church as an unstoppable river whose depth is not contradicted by its size. This international church with people from every race, tongue, tribe and nation, where racism and 'ungodly discrimination is banished' is a place where supernatural manifestations are a regular occurrence and political influence and hi-tech infrastructure are the norm. This church is celebratory of traditional family values where 'men are men' and 'where wives submit to and support their husbands'. In projecting his hopes and aspirations for this 21st century church he emphasizes the significance and biblical imperative of wealth, positing a dialectic relationship between the role of wealth and the building of God's kingdom on earth. No dissonance or contradiction is viewed between these two worlds. The precise quantitative measures⁴⁷ used are indicative of Pastor's Tayo's scientific training and provide an insight into the thought and deliberation given to the issue. The Times Rich List, www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-27360032 cites 104 billionaires in the UK in 2014, with 72 living in London. According to Pastor Tayo's calculation, 17 percent of these individuals based in London would be attending NWC Church. This level of affluence located in an inner London area, which has 62% of the Lower Super Output Areas in the bottom 30% of the country on the Index of Multiple Deprivation www.londonpovertyprofile.org.uk/indicators/boroughs/greenwich would indeed be surprising. However, it does provide some indication of why in an area such as Woolwich, ideas about prosperity gospel would be appealing and highly attractive to many poor and marginalised people.

⁴⁷ Quantitative measures were a frequent barometer used to denote success and presented as such in weekly notices. For example, when reports were given on Saturday outreach sessions, these were often framed in precise numbers of attendance, contacts and commitments. Similarly, the Christmas hamper campaign, was frequently evaluated in terms of the numbers of hampers given out, and money spent over a particular time span.

Welded to the presumed guarantee of Deuteronomy 28.13 stating that God's children are 'the head and not the tail', ordinary people are called upon to make their mark in all spheres of influence with the attendant financial resources. These themes of aspiration and accumulation sanctioned by a biblical mandate highlighted by Pastor Tayo's commentary were frequently reiterated in sermons, activities, multimedia displays, songs and the musical discourse. This envisaging of the perfect church is an excellent example of charismatic religion accommodating and adapting to modernity, (Coleman: 2000). This is the assertive declaration of a body unafraid to cherry pick the mores of the modern age to perpetuate a self-serving and triumphant agenda. What is silenced in this discourse is any embracing of servanthood, asceticism or suffering. These pronouncements situate the church firmly within a frame of prosperity gospel. It also places into a context some of the themes that emerge from the musical discourse.

Bowler (2013) identifies a 'hard' and a 'soft' prosperity and it is clear that prosperity theology does not operate as a single entity. It is more precise to refer to prosperity theologies. The doctrine is operationalized in different ways in different contexts using different theological emphasis (Yong and Attanasi 2012) and is subject to changing interpretations and understandings, and various translations in different cultural contexts (Hunt 2002). Nonetheless Bowler's (2013) differentiation of a hard and soft prosperity is useful in defining different levels of application. She describes hard prosperity as one that engages with concrete material realities. It is contractual in nature and views faith as operating according to precise laws and rules. (Bowler 2013: 97) On the other hand, soft prosperity, sometimes called 'prosperity lite' is less crass and more inclusive. It uses therapeutic language and encourages believers that a change in mental attitude will eventually result in a gradual transformation in their social circumstances and their day-to-day realities (Bowler 2013:78).

I would like to suggest that while Bowler's model is useful in understanding different approaches, it is limiting insofar as it suggests two distinct poles, or specific epochs of time. She cites the 1980s as the decade of hard prosperity (Bowler 2013:97). I see prosperity as operating on a continuum. In the context of NWC, I observed numerous examples of how the church navigated along this continuum. The variety of activities, invited speakers, the background and demographics of church members and the management of a changing musical discourse, oscillated along this trajectory throughout the research.

Hard Prosperity as Evidenced by Visiting Speakers and Multimedia Broadcasts

As already noted, NWC had a number of annual events which established the church as a global entity. Referencing Pastor Tayo's aspiration that the church should be 'an international church', during the course of the field work ministers came from USA, Nigeria, India and Europe to speak at annual conventions and conferences. Evidence of the church's alignment with hard prosperity can be ascertained by the range of invited speakers who are veterans in the Word of Faith movement. Ministers such as Matthew Ashimolowo⁴⁸, John Avanzini⁴⁹, Creflo Dollar⁵⁰, and Wayne Malcolm⁵¹ are some of the examples of ministers with global ministries who visited the church repeatedly. These ministers came with a paraphernalia of products such as books, DVDs and videos, propagating the prosperity gospel.

Two examples of the church's adherence to prosperity gospel can be observed by

⁴⁸ Matthew Ashimolowo is the minister for KICC. See footnote 36 and 56.

⁴⁹ John Avanzini is a Word of Faith preacher and a US televangelist.

⁵⁰ Creflo Dollar is also a US televangelist and founder of World Changers Church International.

⁵¹ UK Wayne Malcolm is known as the 'Business Bishop' and is director of iCan- the International Christ Ambassadors Network.

analysing sermons from two visiting speakers. My first example is US preacher John Avanzini. In his book 'War on Debt', part of his Financial Freedom series, he proclaims:

'Get ready! God is about to release great sums of wealth into your hands. How do you get your share released to you? by giving' Avanzini (1990: 150).

He further unpacked this theology in a visit to the church where he outlined that many Christians were struggling and in debt due to their failure to give God his proper financial due. Using the biblical passage of Genesis 26 as his text, he discussed how Christians should calculate their tithe from the point at which they started their first job. Believers were encouraged to consider whether they 'owed' God money. If this was the case, they needed to repay the 'debt'. A process that he referred to as 'back-tithing'. At the point of which all the repayments were made, they would then supernaturally receive vast sums of money. Avanzini went on to state that he had followed this technique and as a result owned five Jaguars cars that could not be housed in his garage. Furthermore, his wife's wardrobe could not contain all of the clothes that she possessed. In the same service Pastor Tayo referred to Avanzini as his spiritual father, indicating the close relationship between the two men, spiritually and doctrinally. Avanzini in turn prayed that Pastor Tayo would become the richest man in London.

This example of blatant materialism resonates with the castigations raised by mainstream journalists in the US, firstly by Time Magazine (van Biema & Chu 2006) and later in Harper's Magazine, (Anastas 2010) and was reminiscent of the worst excesses that characterized 1980s U.S. televangelists (Bowler 2013). Nonetheless, within the context of a UK congregation, it disclosed a dissonance between some members of the congregation and the leadership when in the following week Pastor Tayo, who after receiving complaints, apologized to the membership who were disquieted by the notion of 'back-tithing'. No mention however was made of the prayer, suggesting while they may have been disagreement in regard to the doctrine of 'back tithing', there were less

difficulties with the overt emphasis on material wealth.

My second example of hard prosperity was demonstrated by Matthew Ashimolowo, pastor of KICC. His '33 irrevocable laws of wealth creation' (Ashimolowo 2009) states that the universe is governed by laws and Christians simply need to identify the law of wealth creation and in so doing will unlock the secret of wealth transfer. The key to the unlocking is activated by *saying*, *seeing* and *sowing*. This theory was exemplified in a sermon entitled "Expand – no limits", preached at NWC as part of the Maximise Life Conference in October 2014. Using Genesis 48, 1-20 as the text, Pastor Matthew told the story of Jacob blessing his grandsons Manasseh and Ephraim. Rather than giving the oldest son the right hand of blessing, Jacob chooses instead to defy tradition by crossing his hands and giving the youngest son the greater blessing. Pastor Matthew explained that the stream of blessing was channelled through the right hand. In the same way that Jacob had ignored tradition, so too would God give 'uncommon blessing' to those who would not usually receive the good things in life. However, in order to receive this 'uncommon' blessing, congregation members were invited to come to the front and sow a seed of £240.00 to receive a miracle in 24 hours. Pastor Matthew further explained that the seed didn't have to be time limited, or the money received in one tranche. For those who didn't have £240.00, they could sow over a period of months in order to release their miracle in the future.

This message was not received in the same manner as the earlier message a few years previously, perhaps indicating changing attitudes with the passage of time demonstrating that responses towards theological stances are not fixed and immovable. The congregation appeared to be enthusiastic about the possibility of 'paying' for a miracle demonstrated by shouts of 'Hallelujah', claps and positive sounds of affirmation. At least 200 people went to the front to 'sow their seed' of £240.00 and this number further

increased when they were given the option of paying in instalments.

Further evidence of hard prosperity was observed when the offering was taken. This ritual was prefaced by the minister shouting, 'Now it's time to sow', followed by the congregation holding their offering envelopes in the air and reciting in unison the 'confession' entitled

'Empowered to Prosper':

*I am a covenant child
Of a covenant keeping God
I am walking in the covenant of...*

*Grace
Favour
Blessings
Increase
Multiplication*

*I am empowered to prosper
I am anointed to create wealth
I am blessed beyond measure*

*The Lord has increased me more and more
The Lord has increased my greatness
And comforted me on every side*

*God's grace abounds towards me
In all things and at all times
I have everything I need
My resources are overflowing
I am wealthy in every way
I am generous and I abound in every good work
I excel in the grace of giving*

*My hands are blessed
Anything I touch
Flourishes and prospers
I am rich
I am wealthy
There is overflowing abundance
In every area of my life*

*My seed is on divine assignment
So, I send you
As a response of my faith*

*Go and grow!
And I'll see you later
In your multiplied form
In Jesus name*

Positive confessions are an important part of prosperity teaching. Believers are taught that they have the ability to 'speak' things into being. The confession cited above was one of two⁵² recited during the course of each service. This is a performed event. It was delivered as a call and response between the minister and congregation in a declamatory manner, half speaking, half shouting. There were pauses at the end of lines to allow for dramatic effect. The minister would allow the confession to establish its own rhythm, sometimes speeding up or slowing down depending on the fervour of the congregation, but always ending in a grand crescendo with several repetitions on lines such as Go and Grow! These lines were repeated to underscore meaning and invigorate faith. Confessions of this type were significant not only in the verbal content, but in the sonic declaration to inspire and enliven faith. The declamatory mode, the volume, the pacing,

⁵² Confessions are written annually by the leader of the church to cohere with the theme for the year. Two confessions are repeated in each service. The first is a general prosperity chant and the second relates to the offering. An example of a confession can be heard at 35:34 on the enclosed CD. The example on the file is called This is my Time to Shine and was used in 2012.

the repetition are sonic features that denote power, triumph, overcoming and victory. Hence the manner is as important as the matter in conveying and reinforcing the ideals of a prosperity gospel.

Messages of hard prosperity were further reiterated through the multimedia presentations that accompany the offering, where members are given instructions on filling in a Gift Aid⁵³ card. The screen depicts the card which has the following Bible verse displayed on the top:

‘So, let each one give as he purposes in his heart’ 2 Corinthians 9:7.

The card has boxes for the following categories, tithe, offering, missions, NWC Covenant Partners, guest speakers, other and total amount enclosed. These boxes are generally filled in with numbers in tens and hundreds of thousands of pounds, with the overall figure, at something like £250,000.

A search on their website revealed the following sermon titles in 2013. Key themes in sermons are often related to giving and the congregation are called upon to ‘sow a seed’ in order to ‘release’ a blessing.

6th October 2013 God is up to something great

13th October 2013 Activating the glory

20th October 2013 A new season

27th October Be strong and do the work

3rd November 2013 I am a finisher

10th November 2013 There's a reward with name on it

17th November 2013 No sermon listed

24th November Transition for transformation

⁵³ Gift Aid is a UK tax relief scheme whereby tax payer can increase the value of their donation to a charity by 25% at no extra cost.

1st December 2013 I'm tuning into glory

8th December 2013 I'm going forward in this glory

15th December 2013 I will not be coming out empty handed

22nd December 2013 Programming your mind for a prosperous new year

These sermon titles focusing on self-help and advancement are typical of the types of messages that are preached and is another element that locates the church's affiliations to a prosperity gospel.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have discussed the broad geographic context of the Royal London borough of Greenwich and the specific context of Woolwich as the location for my fieldwork. Woolwich as a socially deprived area displaying increasing signs of gentrification, is an ideal locale for a study on African neo-Pentecostalism. NWC is presented as a highly developed enterprise positioning itself on the local/global paradigm operational in a wide range of social and spiritual activities. I describe the theological affiliations of the church and point out that an adherence to prosperity gospel is the overriding focus of the church. Sermon material, chanted confessions and multimedia presentations are described to demonstrate how messages of prosperity are reinforced and underlined. I use Bowler's identification of a hard and soft prosperity but note that her analysis is limiting insofar as it concretizes these two positions as fixed and immovable. The findings that emerge through my fieldwork suggests that the operationalization of a theology within the context of a congregation is a more fluid unfolding. The examples cited above locate the belief and theology of the church as embracing and internalizing a hard prosperity. This however, is tempered and mediated by evidences of a softer prosperity, and both applications operate simultaneously. There is little research (apart from Harrison 2005), that give a detailed analysis of how individuals react to a hard

prosperity. Church members are often portrayed as unsuspecting victims at the mercy of unscrupulous charlatans (Hladky 2012, Moore 2013). An analysis of soft prosperity helps us to understand how congregational members re-interpret these theologies within the milieu of their own lives. Some aspects of this will be discussed in Chapter Seven using interview material from the Praise and Worship team.

In the next chapter I will discuss the sounds in their context and relate this to the first component of the music discourse, the esthetic parameter. This refers to the music as it is experienced by the receivers. Receivers in this context are the congregation, and the externally verified barometer of the CCLI database.

CHAPTER FIVE

AN EXPLORATION OF THE SOUNDS IN THEIR CONTEXT AND THE ESTHESIC ANALYSIS

The next three chapter will present the model that I have adapted from Nattiez (1990) and explore the poietic, immanent and esthetic components of the sounds in their context. The data has been drawn from participant observation at NWC Church over a three-year period, between 2011 - 2014. During this period, I attended the church on a regular basis, participating as a worshipper in Sunday services and attending weekly cell groups. I also attended annual conventions, conferences and was invited to participate in an advisory group to assist the leadership with ideas for growth and development. This long-term commitment and involvement in this community enabled a thorough understanding of the belief and practice not only of the music but I was also able to determine how the music related to other signs in the stratosphere of signs. The experience of engaging with the context, the exposure to the emotion and building social relationships helped me to understand how meaning was communicated through the music, and to discover whether these meanings had implications beyond the theological, social and political concerns of the immediate environment. An assessment of the musical materials, the styles, the provenance of the songs and the story of the music in the church helped me to identify the silences and gaps to assess any significant and contradictory elements.

Ethnographic vignettes were used to describe my participation in the field. I begin by describing the positioning of the church in the landscape, together with a description of the external, internal architectural and visual features. As argued previously, it is

important to understand the sounds in their context, because we hear in context. This exploration affords an understanding of the sounds in situ which I go on to assess. In the second half of the chapter I explore the esthetic elements, that is the form as it appears to the receivers.

In this chapter, I present the analysis from a single service. The 11.00 am service on a Sunday in 2012 allowed a thorough investigation of the 'music itself'. This was an ordinary service, insofar as, it was not a special celebration, holiday or convention meeting. It was important to gain a snapshot of what normally takes place. However, it was also necessary to place this in-depth analysis within the context of the whole, and over a six-month period, I taped and documented each Sunday service. Prior to this I had catalogued the songs over a four-week period between May and June 2011. This allowed me to assess whether the findings from the single service were consistent with normal practice.

Secondly, the church's semiotic internal and external signs provide additional modes for analysis when combined with the musical discourse. It is my contention that an analysis of the sights and sounds of Pentecostalism provide a unique insight into this diverse and distinct mode of belief.

Vignette 1 – West African Pentecostalism in Woolwich

It is 10.50am on a Sunday morning and Woolwich town centre is bustling with shoppers. I see all types of people hurrying through the thoroughfare. Black, White, Asian, young, old, abled, disabled, male, female - this is pluralistic London showing off the richness of

its diversities.⁵⁴ As I walk leisurely through the shopping centre, I simultaneously view signs of inner city decline, juxtaposed with signs of regeneration. Boarded-up buildings displaying 'To Let' signs, as well as signs for 'new retail opportunities'. I pass a deserted Travelodge Hotel sat nestled amongst the African and Caribbean food shops with their colourful array of green bananas, plantains, oranges and apples on proud display. Poundland, filled with shoppers appears to be competing vigorously with the 99p Store opposite. I pass several Black hairdressers filled with young girls plaiting hair furiously alongside nail bars with East Asian workers; these businesses appear to be thriving amidst the economic gloom. As I walk pass the TK Maxx and the Caribbean take-away, moving away from the hive of intense activity my senses are enlivened by the smells of jerk chicken and the pulsating reggae music. As the shoppers disappear and I approach the end of the thoroughfare, I see a large edifice (Figure 1) emerging in the distance. The cream building contrasts with a brown brick structure (Figure 3) on the other side of the road, but from my vantage point the two buildings appear to be adjacent. The word CATHEDRAL⁵⁵ in white capital letters, flanks the corner of the building, vertically. This church, directly opposite NWC, called Christ Faith Tabernacle (CFT) is another large African church, boasting a similarly impressive former Granada cinema on the other side of the road. The two buildings on opposite sides of the Woolwich Ferry roundabout vie for dominance in this inner London landscape, further evidence of the capital assets of

⁵⁴ According to the 2011 census 90 different languages are spoken in Greenwich. Black and Black British form 19.1% of the population and Asian and Asian British are 11.7% (http://www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/info/200088/statistics_and_census_information/114/population_data/2)

⁵⁵ The use of the word 'cathedral' for an independent Black church may be viewed as pompous when used by a group outside of the ecclesiastical mainstream appropriating the semantic trappings of the religious establishment to accrue dominance. However, Theodore Komisarjevsky, who designed the building in the 1930s in style of a cathedral using features of Italian gothic theatre often used for churches, stated that 'Houses of worship were not intended to be like cold dismal drill halls or mortuaries. They were not meant to depress people. Churches were designed for 'religious shows' which has the same origin as the shows of Secular theatre. The aim of ecclesiastical architecture was to attract people, to offer them not only rows of pews in which to say their prayers but romantic relaxation and artistic pleasure amid surrounds of hope, colourful beauty and harmony' (<http://www.greenwich.co.uk/magazine/10496-woolwich-granada-theatre-powis-street/>). CFT, therefore have endeavoured to maintain the building in the spirit of the original intention of the designer, emphasizing the role that Black churches can play in maintaining English Heritage.

African Christianity in the UK.⁵⁶ African Christianity is alive and thriving in the Royal London Borough of Greenwich.

Figure 1: New Wine Church



On a previous occasion while taking notes for my fieldwork outside of NWC church, I struck up a conversation with a local, who was born in 1927 in Woolwich, and had lived in the area all of his life. He told me that his name was Alfie, ‘same as him over there’ he said, referring the name of the minister of the church over the road, Apostle Alfred Williams. I was surprised that he knew the minister’s name, particularly as he said that he

⁵⁶ Many large BMCs are situated in inner London boroughs. Jesus House part of the Redeemed Christian Church of God, (RCCG) in Brent, Ruach in Brixton, Kilburn and Walthamstow, Glory House in Plaistow, Kingsway International Christian Centre (KICC) relocated from their premises in Hackney to accommodate the 2012 Olympics to a 24-acre site in Chatham, Kent, due to the lack of suitable premises in London. Many smaller churches are also scattered throughout many London boroughs. The Being Built Together report Rogers (2013) cites Southwark as the London borough with the highest number of African Churches, identifying some 240 churches. All of the larger churches own their buildings, and the smaller churches may own or rent premises in schools, hotels and community centres and also from other churches. Many BMCs rent space from the mainstream historic denominations further supporting and maintaining heritage sites. See ‘Sharers, Guests or Tenants’ for an analysis of the challenges and opportunities that such arrangements engender: (http://www.cte.org.uk/Articles/317146/Home/Staff_folders_TBD/Jenny/Ecumenical_Notes_Docs/Sharers_Guests_or.aspx).

didn't go to church and was reluctant to talk about religion. He recounted that he used to believe in God, but this had ceased after his wife died a very painful death. After showing me a number of drawings that he had produced for the veterans' club, he recalled attending both cinemas with friends when he was a lad, and remembered the organ being installed in the Granada building in the 1930s. He spoke about many happy days spent talking about films and film stars that I had no knowledge of. I asked him how he felt about the cinemas being taken over by churches. 'Well', he said, '...it's good for people who need that sort of thing.... but...they are taking over everywhere, aren't they? They've got the cinemas, the schools, and most of the Clock House.' I didn't sense any bitterness or animosity in Alfie's comments, just a weary resignation that things were no longer what they used to be, and these were buildings that were no longer accessible to him.

Visual Signs of Dominance and Marginality

My walk to the church through the shopping centre establishes African Christianity as a dominant force in a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic and economically challenged area. Not only is there the existence of two palatial buildings⁵⁷ satisfying the descriptor of 'mega' and fulfilling similar functions in close proximity carrying the potential of accommodating between 3,000 - 4,000 people within a stone's throw of each other. But also, as referred to by Alfie, there were numerous smaller African churches meeting in The Clock House Community Centre about half a mile away. Both NWC and CFT provide good examples of churches that have purchased and refurbished heritage sites to a very high standard. Furthermore, NWC owned the Coronet Cinema in addition to pubs and other buildings in the vicinity representing enormous capital assets within the Black community.

This confirms what has been outlined by scholars (Adedibu 2012) that BMCs, particularly

⁵⁷ NWC had attempted to buy the building on the other side of the road, but had lost out to CFT.

African BMCs have a significant presence in areas where there are Black populations. According to the London Church Census, (Brierley 2013) 19% of the UK Black population attend church on a Sunday, this rises to 50% when considering London. BMC scholars (Sturge 2005 & Adedibu 2012) wisely caution that numerical growth is not the only indicator of health, however, my task here is not to comment on the spiritual health or otherwise of the churches, but to point out the capital assets of African Christianity in Woolwich.

My walk through the shopping centre is significant in the visual placing of both churches on the urban landscape communicating both theological and economical signs. Both buildings as tall, architectural monuments assert their dominance in different ways. The NWC building is painted cream. Machin (2010) notes the association of brightness and the meaning potential contained in light colours. There is the obvious disassociation with darkness, evil and secrecy, capitalizing on notions of truth, positivity and openness. Values that are appropriated to Christianity. The use of the colour cream has the added advantage that the building can be seen from afar. CFT in contrast, has maintained the brown brick of its previous owner, but has stamped its dominance by the use of the word 'Cathedral' emblazoned in simple, capital white lettering along the side. Both buildings have tall towers and these features enhance their position on the landscape as conspicuous and authoritative. Scholars have pointed to the equation made by mega churches on the size of a building as evidence of God's favour Goh (2008) and Birman in Meyer and Moor (2006).

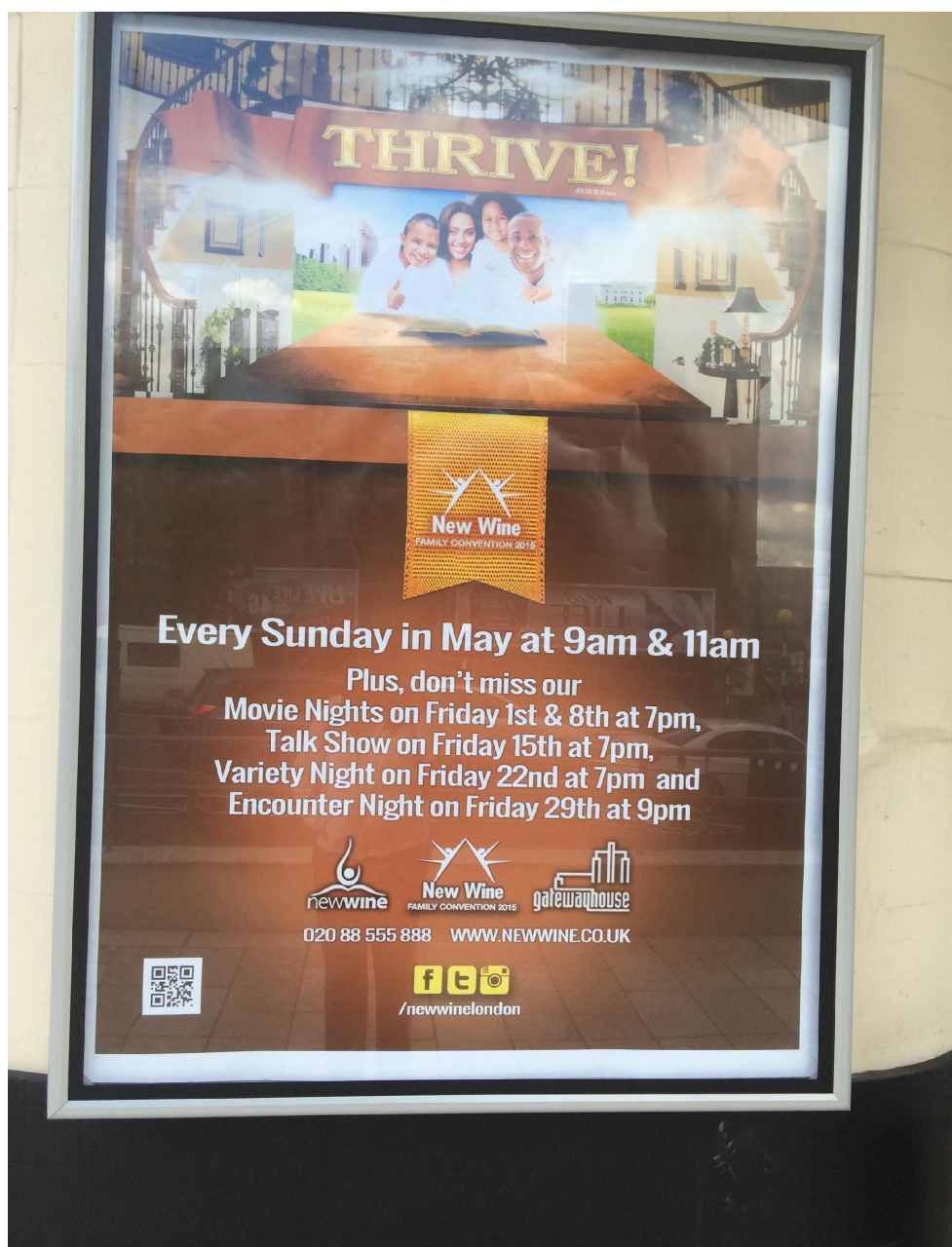
The size, architectural design and aesthetic considerations act as material assets that proclaim the tenets of a prosperity gospel that is not bashful in publicly proclaiming the

'mutually reinforcing relationship between Pentecostalism and economic advancement' Nolivos (2012: 101),

an example, of religious ideals made manifest in the material. Of course, the relationship between size of buildings and proclamation of a big God are not unique to neo-Pentecostalism as demonstrated by the large capital assets of the mainline churches such as the Church of England, notwithstanding their heritage and legacy. However, it could be argued that there is a qualitative difference being between, proclaiming the glory of God, and proclaiming a glory as evidence of a doctrinal efficacy.

Nonetheless, I would also like to suggest that the position of these two impressive buildings dominant on the horizon, but at the edge of the town, communicate simultaneously dominance and marginality. The dominance is evidenced by some of the external architectural and aesthetic features as discussed. The marginality, on the other hand referenced in my communication with Alfie. Alfie was keen to talk and unafraid to engage in a 30-minute conversation with a dreadlocked Black female stranger recounting quite personal memories of his life. He reminisced on a nostalgic past when both buildings in their heyday as cinemas were central to the entertainment lives of locals and thronged with theatre-goers on a weekly basis. These buildings and the activities contained within were now largely distant from the lives of most white people living in the borough. This distance was also represented by my observation in attending the church and realising that NWC had failed to make an impact on the lives of the indigenous white population. This, despite numerous civic and social interactions with the local authority and the wider community. The dominance and marginality point to the multivalent nature of the meaning-making potential of the landscape.

Figure 2: Family Convention Poster



As the NWC building comes more fully into focus, I see a large poster, 8ft by 5ft advertising the Family Convention (Figure 2) taking place in May. The word THRIVE is displayed in large gold capital letters across the centre of the poster depicting the image of a smiling Black family. The image is of a dark-skinned father, lighter shade mother with long straight hair, son and daughter. An image of the idealized Black family all dressed in

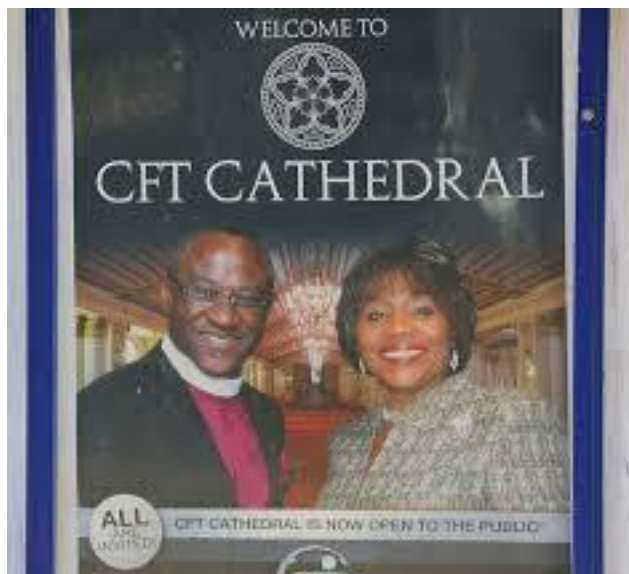
white, suggestive of the purity in this traditional unit, are placed in the centre of the picture. They are surrounded by a picture mirroring a mansion with a circular stairway on both sides of the picture. In the background are green fields. The middle-class representations are in stark contrast to some of the images of poverty that I've just viewed walking through the town centre. NWC's social media credentials are attested by the usual Facebook, Twitter, Instagram logos positioned at the bottom of the poster.

Figure 3: Christ Faith Tabernacle



CFT on the other side of the road, is similar in many respects. It too, boasts a large poster advertising the services, but this is located on a bill at the corner of the street alongside a Vodafone poster and shows an image of Apostle Alfred Williams and his wife. (Figure 4) Apostle Williams proudly sporting his ministerial collar clearly establishing his credentials as a man of the cloth. Mrs Williams wears subtle hints of make -up and small attractive jewellery. Both smile into the camera proudly. I can see now that the word CATHEDRAL is also emblazoned horizontally across the top of the building. Like NWC, the lettering for the church is in large white capitals.

Figure 4: Apostle Alfred and Mrs Williams



Both buildings share a number of elements in common in regard to the communicative value of the text and graphics. Writing, image and colour are important signifiers and fulfil different functions in the semiosphere (Kress 2010). There is little writing on either building. The writing that is displayed is bold, in capital letters, simple, white referencing the positivity mentioned in the last paragraph, and conveys simple information. The minimalist stripped down presentation convey a modern feel.

Both buildings are devoid of symbols, apart from the logos that represent the churches. It is interesting to observe that traditional Christian iconography is not present on either building. Bowler (2013) notes that churches that preach a prosperity gospel do not use traditional Christian symbols such as the cross due to its referencing of suffering and death. They prefer instead to use images of globes and eagles connoting ideas of internationalism, victory and triumphalism accentuating elements of a prosperity gospel.

Both buildings depict an image of a Black family. In the NWC poster, the family are sitting at a table with an open Bible. The CFT image depicts Apostle Alfred Williams and his wife, welcoming people to the church. Both images share notions of a traditional family unit. Indeed, many BMCs use the image of a husband and wife team to advertise their ministries. Encoded in these images are ideas of success in family life, underpinned by the use of the word THRIVE in the case of NWC. Prosperity gospel teaches that believers will be successful in all areas of life. In a climate of increased pressures on families and the attendant social difficulties that emanate, these images and archetypes of successful Black family life are highly appealing.

Both images (despite the ambiguity in regard to a politics of shade⁵⁸), convey that these are Black churches. This was understood in my conversation with Alfie. This is in contrast to many images used by NWC on their website and in marketing materials which often depict smiling faces from across the globe, reminiscent of a United Colours of Benetton advertisement. These types of images are not reflective of the churches' congregations

⁵⁸ The term 'colorism' coined by Walker (1984) refers to the awarding of social privilege and status in accordance to the lightness or darkness of one's skin colour. This hierarchy of skin colour is found all over the world, but in Black communities has a history in the trans-Atlantic slave trade where the lighter coloured offspring of the white slave master were awarded house slave status, and the darker skinned slaves were relegated to the hard labour of the field. Colorism persists as a problem in the 21st century where according to Harrison (2010) in the U.S. colorism is a more serious impediment to advancement in senior management than racism, and also in Black communities where notions of beauty are often aligned to the fairness of one's skin. Hunter (2002) defines light skin as a form of social capital which directly translates to enhanced educational and economic attainments for the woman of colour. The referencing in the NWC poster relates to ideas of beauty and success.

and indicate a desire to be seen as racially inclusive.

Finally, a sense of modernity is referenced in both images. The use of the social media tags on the NWC poster, indicating the use of modern media technologies as central to all activities. Furthermore, the female representation of women with straightened hair, no hats and makeup establish these as modern BMC Pentecostal entities in stark contrast to the images of the Holiness tradition of the Windrush generation where women were encouraged to present themselves modestly, i.e. wearing hats, natural hair and no make-up.

The backdrop to both images are buildings. In both cases the spectacular interiors of both churches are used. In the case of NWC, the image is a montage of the interior of a large house, with a spiral staircase reminiscent of the interior of the building. The interior of CFT showing a shining chandelier, and red carpet, also a spiral staircase embedding ideals of material wealth.

Vignette 2 – Entering NWC Church

I arrive at NWC Church on a bitterly cold April morning. I ascend the steps of the Grade 2 listed building which takes up a sizeable portion of the corner of the road, alongside the pub that has also been purchased by the church. The dismal weather contrasts with the physical and the emotional warmth of the interior as I make my way through the teeming crowds. Men in hi –vis jackets direct the crowds to ensure that people cross the road safely. Cars drop off people, unable to park on the double red line. Young and older Black people dressed variously in African costume, smart business suits and trendy fashion are simultaneously leaving the 9.00 o'clock service and arriving for the 11.00 am session. The ethnicities of the people here do not represent the diversity that I witnessed in my

walk through the town centre. The overwhelming majority are Black, I see one white person towards the back of the hallway; it becomes clear to me later in my fieldwork that this person is Eastern European, one of a small number that had started attending the church.

The waves of chatter swirl around me as I push through the heavy security doors and ascend the stairs. A TV screen in the foyer broadcasts the activities from the main auditorium. I pass a small book shop called 'Revelation Base'. Another sign further along indicates that this is where you can purchase resources from 'The Teaching Ministry of Dr Tayo'. In the bookshop, there are a wide selection of books, DVDs, CDs from a variety of contemporary evangelical US and UK writers. I note titles such as *Rising Above Recession*, *Laying the Foundation for a Prosperous Year*, *Expand – Limits Gone*, *The Power of Positive Parenting* etc. The inside of the large upstairs foyer is filled with people of all ages, with many children running around. Plush leather sofas in a variety of tasteful colours are located around the circumference. I eavesdrop on various conversations: the smartly dressed business man talks about his weariness in only coming home for the weekend while completing a KPMG contract in Berlin; the middle aged mum with a young baby about to return to work bemoans the difficulties of finding affordable childcare; the undergraduate student who has taken a year out of university to compete in the show *Britain's Got Talent*, expresses her delight on getting through to the semi-finals; another couple discuss a meeting that has been arranged after the service to discuss the singles ministry. People share their stories with one another, signs of conviviality, support and care. The scene is one of buoyancy and laughter. The sounds are of a community at peace with itself, relaxed and affirming. There are, however, some people standing idly by perhaps waiting for friends to arrive or those who have no friends. A plaque immediately above me, in gold lettering, at the top of the stairs states that NWC is a place 'where you are valued and not numbered'.

As I make my way through to the main auditorium, I am greeted by three smiling ushers, wearing colour coordinated garments. In turn, they shake my hand firmly and welcome me and gently steer me into the church. It feels a little onerous to have to shake hands three times.

I note the size of the auditorium, with its capacity of about 1,500, filled with plush red seats. Several large cameras are situated around the space, with a huge lighting rig attached to the ceiling. Several data projectors embedded in the set up. Young people in Black T-shirts with the NWC logo on the front and 'Production Team' printed on the back are positioned at the many free-standing cameras posted around the building and standing around the large PA desk situated at the back of the church.

NWC is an example of a modern BMC. The visual cues seen in this environment signify professionalism, order, authority and modernity. Different types of uniform are observed, ranging from the hi-vis jackets of the safety officers, to the colour harmonisation of the ushers and the production team in their Black T-shirts. I note later on that the worship team are also in colour coordinated outfits. The use of colour is highly visible and stamps acarefully coordinated management function only necessary in a mega church. Of course, smaller churches may also have ushers, but it isn't necessary to identify their presence in such a direct manner. This use of uniforms communicates visual signs of efficiency. This is church with a high level of internal organisational capacity. Furthermore, the plush interior, the evidence of huge amounts of technology, the materiality of the environment signifies a mega church. Goh refers to this as 'performance of the mega' (Goh 2008: 3). Messages, ideologies and doctrine are mediated through spatial arrangements.

Modernity is also communicated through the technological sophistication. Services are

filmed and projected in the auditorium providing access in overflow areas if necessary. The website offers live streaming of services, digital downloads for purchase or free, as well as radio and TV clips of sermons by Dr Tayo and other visiting speakers to the church. A live video is broadcasted each Sunday with information on the notices. This weekly news is an in-house production made by the multimedia team highlighting key activities taking place in the week ahead, advertising forth coming programmes and visiting international speakers. Mass media forms a site where religiosity, community and identity cohere. Pentecostal churches have used technology not just as a tool for evangelism, but as a 'new fundamental' mediation for the religious experience. It is a means of 'eating modernity' (Martin-Barbero 1997: 109 in Hoover & Lundby).

The conversations that I overheard indicate that attendees to the church come from all walks of life. Everything that I hear is in English, but there are a variety of accents – I hear Londoners, various Caribbean accents, but it is clear that the majority are from West Africa – Nigeria and Ghana. People in the church are a combination of recently arrived migrants, people who have lived in the UK for a number of years, as well as first and second-generation migrants. The church provides an important function in providing a space where people can engage with informal networks, build business contacts, make friends, and find spiritual sustenance.

This materiality and technological sophistication is owned and controlled by a Black community in a postcolonial society where Black people own and control very few material assets. In the context of the borough of Greenwich where there are no Black owned community centres or private enterprise on this scale, this is a significant element. From this view point, the internal and external fabric of a mega church are visible signs of a prospering Black enterprise and the church provides a source of Black pride. Within in a context of difficult economic conditions the church symbolizes and epitomizes the

possibility of the good life.

I have spent time describing the context as well as the external and internal setting to demonstrate that there is a relationship between the sounds, the visuals and the theology. Visual signs are powerful communicators of worldviews and identities and are deliberately selected to convey ideologies. Visual signs are not accidental, and a church like NWC spends a good deal of time and effort in selecting the image that is portrayed to the outside world. The work done by visual signs is twofold, firstly it projects an image and identity, and secondly, it determines and conditions behaviours. However, as previously argued, it is my contention that an analysis of the visual alone is partial and does not do justice to the full picture. However, before an analysis of the music takes place, it is important to understand how expectation is conferred by the explicit and implicit codes that have been communicated.

Vignette 3 – ‘Good Music’ - the burden of signification

Entering the dimly lit auditorium, I feel, before I hear, the welter of sound. The melodies of the keyboard and the vibrations of the bass ripple through my body. The music envelopes me before I observe any of the visual evidence or understand any possible references. I process the sounds as music – popular music. The instrumentation of bass, drums, keyboards play insistent, pulsating, energetic sounds. These are not sounds associated with the high church establishments – these are the sounds by virtue of the environment, of popular religion. This is ‘good music.’ These are the sounds of Pentecost.

‘It is impossible to have church without good music’, so says Maynard-Reid (2000: 69)

As noted in Chapter Two, the collision of race, music, religion and place are seen as

normative and borne out by historical circumstance. 'Good music' is a signifier for the Black church. Certain types of sounds, rhythms and instrumentations are bound up in this notion of the 'good'. There is an expectation that when one enters a Black Pentecostal environment there will be this type of sonic encounter. As pointed out by Kalu (2010) the sounds of Pentecost are its most attractive feature and BMCs carry a burden of signification, the expectation is heightened when one enters a mega church. Bowler and Reagon (2014) points out that in these environments, music is

'...elevated to a previously unthinkable level of sophistication and scale' (Bowler and Reagon 2014: 187).

Maintaining this level of sophistication requires considerable expenditure of resource and time. NWC expends a good time in ensuring that these standards are maintained. This 'good music' is the central element that denotes Pentecostalism.

Vignette 4 - Positioning the Worship - Performativity

As I ascend more stairs to enter the auditorium, (another team of ushers, this time dressed in all Black, with matching neck ties) welcome me again, but without the handshake. They hand me a NWC Chronicle. This professionally produced leaflet summarises last week's sermon, gives details of the following week's activities and provides a section for making sermon notes. Descending the final set of stairs, I am directed by yet another group of ushers who lead me to my seat. This is to ensure that no seat is left unoccupied. Congregational members with children are guided to seats in a raised middle section to accommodate restless children and crying babies. Parents are encouraged by the ushers to make a quick exit with unsettled offspring, so that the staged activities are undisturbed. In this section, there is a good deal of toing and froing. The lower section, by contrast is occupied by adults and young people, penned into their fixed seating. Movement here is more difficult.

I sense that I am entering a performative activity – I am reminded by someone who said to me a few months previously that entering NWC was like stepping into a giant television set. The very large stage is occupied by the band to the far right comprising of two keyboard players, seated at their instruments one behind the other; a bass guitar and a drummer on a raised platform in a see-through Perspex cabin. I note the omission of an electric guitar. All of the musicians dressed in Black are male. The young singers are dressed casually in grey and bright yellow. The colours conveying a spring-like feeling. The singers comprising of 1 male and 3 females are positioned strategically, each clustered around their own microphones. An air of professionalism surrounds the activities.

There is a general hubbub of noise as the musicians warm up on their instruments and people enter the building and take their seats, some engaging in conversation. There is a relaxed atmosphere, with lots of people milling around.

Positional and Visual Arrangements

The visual and positional arrangements of the music is worthy of consideration. The worship is led by one main worship leader and four additional singers who accompany on backing vocals. These are among the best singers in the church and have endured lengthy processes of audition and rehearsal to attain this position. The song leaders are also dressed casually but always colour coordinated. There are four teams in the church, one for each week of the month, and each team wears a different set of colours. The visual image represents casual, modern professionalism.

The band consisting of a bass guitar, kit drums, and two keyboards are also located on

the raised stage. The musicians generally male (during the period of fieldwork I have seen one female keyboard player) are also dressed casually in Black and aged between 18-30.

The heightened advantage of the music team places them in a place of dominance above the congregation surrounded by the paraphernalia of sound equipment. This distancing away from the congregation emphasises the dominance of the music in the environment.

In the next sections I will be documenting and analysing Nattiez's 'esthetic' constituent. The 'esthetic' being the experience and the perception of the music from the point of view of the receivers. I have defined receiver in this context as myself as a worshipper, but also other worshippers in the congregation.

Vignette 5 – Participating in the Worship - Access to Ritual and Symbol

I nestle snugly into my comfortable seat waiting for the performance of worship. The dimmed lights further emphasis the elements of performativity reinforced by the architectural features of the converted cinema. The gently twinkling lights embedded in the grey curtains that form the backdrop draw my attention to the activity on the stage.

The worship leader (W.L.) for the morning is a very attractive young woman dressed smartly in a bright yellow top, straight legged black trousers and matching yellow six-inch glossy patent heels. I note her bone straight bobbed hair style, sparkly earrings and heavily made up face thinking about the changes that had taken place in Black Pentecostalism since I was a child where a woman looking like this would not have been allowed to lead worship. She takes the microphone and enjoins the congregation to:

W.L. *'Turn to your neighbour and say, "Welcome to my Father's house"'. She continues these invocations of welcoming the congregation and welcoming the Holy Spirit. While this is unfolding – the keyboard starts to play punchy staccato chords, repeating a simple ascending riff while the drummer encased in his plastic cage, rides the hi-hat cymbal.*

W.L. *'We say, rise Oh God, rise Oh God, inhabit the praises of your people come and dwell in the presence of your people.'*

She sings a long 'Yeah' starting just after the main beat with an increasing crescendo over the next two bars finishing with a punctuated exclamation on 'Yeah!' The keyboard plays accentuated chords, slightly behind the beat with the drummer emphasising a syncopated RnB beat.

A clearly articulated 'C'mon' signals to the congregation to stand and to begin singing. The rhythmic shift to the strong beats coincides with the start of the song. The rhythmic inflection is a little unsteady on the first rendition as if the team need to find their musical feet.

The melody consists of a simple repeating pattern covering a scalar pattern of four notes. The congregation enthusiastically embrace the song, engaging in a little dance moving joyfully from left to right and singing with full gusto:

*'Let the glory of the Lord, rise among us,
Let the glory of the Lord, rise among us,
Let the glory of our King, rise among us,
Let it rise.'*

The keyboard player plays on the beat emphasising the main chords – allowing space for

the lead vocalist who gives full vent to an extended melisma, sliding between the notes.

The music draws me in, and I jump to my feet, the driving up tempo beat combined with the simple repetitive melody shake off any vestiges of tiredness that may be remaining from my Sunday morning slumber. People in the congregation also fall in line with the music and start moving from left to right, hands raised in the air in worship, eyes tightly closed seemingly transported to a transcendent place. I am bumped by the woman next to me, who appears to be oblivious to my presence - the power of the music picks the congregation up and carries them along in its flow.

The second time around the band increase the harmonic activity building to a crescendo – with frenetic activity from the first keyboard player, here the W.L. takes more of improvisatory role allowing the backing singers to carry the main line of the melody. The melisma is used to full pelt. Another upward transposition increases the emotional intensity. The lyrical content with its emphasis on ‘rising’ is mirrored in the harmonic structure of the music.

The words are displayed on the screen against the backdrop of the worship team on the stage. Hymn books are not used nor are they needed in this environment, the simple words are easy to remember. This is also a familiarity with the material. Most of the people in the congregation have their eyes closed in worship. The songs are familiar to them. These songs are part of the Christian mainstream.

The congregation and W.L. enter into an animated call and response, repeating several times:

(W.L.) Let your.....(Congregation): Let your

(W.L.) Glory..... (Congregation): Glory

(W.L.) Let it..... (Congregation): Let it

(W.L.) Rise..... (Congregation): Rise

The word 'Glory' is substituted for 'Spirit', and then 'Power' increasing in intensity on each iteration. The syncopated displacing of 'Rise' emphasises the word and adds to the emotional fervour and builds to a fever pitch. The rising chord sequence that anticipates the beat reinforce the theme of rising. There is simultaneously a sense of play and out of control excitement, almost as if on a runaway train. The song eventually comes to a long-extended ending with the singers in harmony on the final note. This culminates in claps, cheers and shouts of Hallelujah.

The W.L. takes the microphone and says Hallelujah...to which the congregation re-join, 'Hallelujah' - an extended emphasis on the 'lujah' referencing a particular BMC intonation. The congregation familiar with the call, respond accordingly, 'Hallelujah, Hallelujah', giving the same emphasis.

The W.L continues, The Bible says in Ps 103-

'Bless the Lord, oh my soul and ALL that is within me...

Bless His Holy name, bless the Lord, oh my soul and forget not His benefits.

What are His benefits to you? He's healed your body. He's saved you from death. Do you know what? You might not be where you want to be, but you are not what you used to be –because the Lord has saved you. There were times that you should have died a long time ago, but the Lord healed you, the Lord delivered you and therefore you will go back down memory lane and lift up your hands and bless the Lord and All, I said All...I'm talking about your liver, your heart, your kidney will bless the Lord...and forget not His benefits....

While the W.L is giving this long-extended introduction to the next song, the keyboard player using a Hammond organ sound plays an old-style Black gospel riff, playing major

ninths before moving into and playing a tremolo piano bass with repeated octaves in the right hand, over a complex Afro Cuban beat.

The introduction consists of a syncopated brass melody with an ascending rhythmic pattern landing on a high B \flat . This is a traditional hymn (hence the reference to memory lane) is played with a contemporary, frenetic up tempo beat. As in the previous song – the backing singers maintain the melody line while the W.L. improvises around the theme, displaying virtuosic vocal technique.

She leads the congregation in:

'Bless the Lord, oh my soul, bless the Lord, oh my soul and forget not all his benefits'. This is not the traditional version of the hymn that I'm familiar with. This modern, funky upbeat version is musically very sophisticated.

I am conscious of the woman next to me, lost in worship, fervently singing out of tune. Apart from being an annoyance to me – this hardly matters – she is clearly lost in wonder and praise in this aesthetic and spiritual experience.

A riff over 'Hallelujah, and Lord you are worthy of the praise' is repeated several times over a two-chord chromatic hook, interspersed with a funky bass line. This is accompanied by an intricate hand clap and a complicated hi life rhythm in the drums. At this point the interaction is musically very complex, but the competent congregation follow the instructions from the stage effortlessly.

The words 'Can't stop praising, can't stop dancing' gives permission for the congregation to engage in bodily movement – at this point the singing stops and people start to dance. This represents an emotional high point – many people have hands lifted in the air –

mouthings words, eyes tightly closed, moving in time with the music.

W.L.: 'Come on NWC, let me hear you sing...'

The middle 8 comprises of a repeating Hallelujah on a two-note motif repeated several more times. The congregation and the W.L. enter into a protracted call and response play on the words – many people are smiling and laughing. Celebration and pleasure are central to the experience.

Eventually, this marathon of a song comes to an end with the congregation clapping, speaking in tongues, praying, some continue singing their own improvised phrases. There is no compulsion; while most members are standing and participating, a few people are sitting, intently staring into smartphones indifferent to the ecstatic experience others seemed to be experiencing. Many people are still walking in. The private demonstration of ecstasy is untouched by the public atmosphere. The volume of the music and praise drown out any extraneous chatter or noises.

As the volume of the song dies down, there is a subtle shift to the mood. The keyboard plays a quieter, more melodious refrain.

W.L.: (Voice tinged with emotion): 'Lord you are worthy, you are worthy of all the honour, you are worthy of all honour, to the only wise God, who is able to keep us from falling...we worship you Jesus...we worship you Jesus, because only you deserve our praise...'

The W.L. leads the supplication continuing using verbal fragments from the song over the melodic phrases of the keyboard, her voice increasing with the intensity of emotion. The congregation engaged in their own praise and prayer are gently led into the next song:

'You deserve the glory, and the honour, so we lift our hands in worship, as we praise your holy name...'

The refrain is repeated several times over a slow-moving string accompaniment on the keyboards. Limited contributions from the drum and bass allow for an unhurried, expansive, stretching of the words and the melody. The W.L. adds interest by ad libbing over the simple melody sung by the congregation.

‘There is no one else like you’ – repeated several times. The swathe of sound creates a sea of worship, in which congregation members swim, revelling in their own private spaces. Again, the song finishes after much repetition, the congregation slides into private worship led by the W.L. with prayer, speaking in tongues, speaking words from the next song, invoked by the keyboard player who has started playing, maintaining the mellow atmosphere...

‘You are Alpha and Omega, we worship you our Lord, you are worthy to be praised...’

This song leads to a fervent outpouring of emotion – feeling like a great climax encased in a huge wall of sound. Several stanzas are sung without the aid of instruments. The unaccompanied voices lend themselves to a raw, authentic display of feelings.

As the song slows down, Pastor Michael, preacher for the morning takes the stage, and leads in an impassioned and fervent prayer in a raised voice. Congregational members join in also praying audibly, some continue singing, while the keyboard plays. The minister makes the pronouncement...

‘...We declare liberty, we declare freedom, we declare pleasure, pleasure...the days of pain are over, we declare a new season in this house, Oh Lord we worship you...’

At the end of the prayer – the W.L. leads the congregation in one final song.

‘Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty, early in the morning, my song shall raise to thee...’

This traditional hymn is sung in a fairly sedate manner, the W.L. continues with the ad libs, but with less congregational call and response. The last line

‘God in three persons...’

is repeated several times, with one final a cappella to end the song. Pastor Michael leads

the congregation in the confession for the year, 'Rising and Shining'. The worship team leave the stage, and the congregation are invited to turn to their neighbour and welcome them, signalling the end of the worship session.

As I take my seat, I reflect on the worship session. I have enjoyed singing the songs and participating but wonder at the fact that no songs were sung that reflected that the predominant ethnicity of the church. I question my desire for indigenous music and wonder if this was an unrealistic expectation, we are after all in the middle of Woolwich. I am reminded of a recent encounter that I had when visiting Ghana where I asked my taxi driver what sort of music he sung in his church, and he responded that they sang 'good American music.'

The Esthetic – Pentecostal Ritual Experience

The esthetic is the experience and perception of the music by the congregation who I have identified as the receivers. The Praise and Worship session is a very important part of the overall service. Lasting nearly 40 minutes of a two-hour service, this slot emphasised the centrality of the music to the environment and confirms its role as a ritual activity experienced by the worshipper. An uncontested definition of the term ritual as described by the Compact Oxford English Dictionary defines it as 'a religious or solemn ceremony involving a series of actions performed according to a set order.' Ritual, like the word liturgy used in the introduction is, not often associated either with Pentecostal vocabulary (Albrecht 1999: 9) or with Pentecostal performativity (Lindhardt 2011) due to the use of these words deemed to be too restrictive or unspiritual for Pentecostal environments (Albrecht 1992: 107). The activity functions as a ritual experience characterised by improvisation and spontaneity. These features are noted in the dance, the hand claps, the repetitions, the unscripted vocal injections of the W.L. amongst other

factors. However, as observed by Ingalls (2015) Praise and Worship in Pentecostal churches is not without direction:

‘...it is characterised by a goal-oriented progression involving the separate but related action of ‘Praise and Worship’ Ingalls (2015: 7).

The primary goal is to facilitate an encounter with the divine. The secondary goal is to prepare congregants to receive the Word, i.e. the preaching. The progression in the 40-minute session begins with upbeat and energetic praise songs. These songs also fulfil the role as a call to action, i.e. to worship and also serves as a welcome, both to the supernatural and the worshippers. This then moves through to quieter more reflective material. The W.L. choosing the set list for the service has this goal and order in mind when preparing and selecting songs for the service. A similar order noted by Alexander (2009) is worth quoting in full to express the sensual nature of the experience.

‘But not all Pentecostal music is energetic. The singing and music at Pentecostal worship services tends to start strong and loud: it gets people on their feet, and the energy is high. But after a while the tempo slows, the mood relaxes, and the soothing, peaceful songs flow. Worshipers may sit down or sway gently during the softer, gentler songs. This time of the service is calming, less celebratory, and more relational. The structure of Pentecostal worship is diverse and varied, but it’s rarely all high-octane. Like sex, sometimes it’s passionate in a rip my clothes off kind of way and sometimes passionate in a tease me slowly’ kind of way’ Alexander (2009: 22).

This format noted by Ingalls (2015) and Alexander (2009) is one that is characteristic of most Pentecostal or charismatic settings and was observed in all the services that I attended. This deliberate construction of the experience may appear manipulative, but it was clear from my observation that some people chose to disengage. In fact, I saw, on many occasions often during the first 30 minutes of the service, people were still wandering in. Indeed, some people sat in their seats and chose not to engage. The fact that the music had an order meant that it was fulfilling its role as Praise and Worship.

There is a play of signifiers that participants understand and engage with. Participation in this ritual activity for those who engage is transformative. It is a meaning-making process that performs a type of psychological and spiritual refreshing enabling one to forget about the cares of the week. A certain type of music and singing are central to this process. If these sounds are taken away from the ritual, it would cease to exist.

Pleasure

Engagement in this ritual activity was pleasurable. It was clear to me that the congregation were engaging in an activity that was enjoyable and had a high entertainment value. The positional and visual arrangements as referred to already, framed it as entertainment, and it was received as such by the congregation. The well-rehearsed band, the dynamic vocals and the tight rhythm section, indeed the overall high quality of musicianship executed by the team, ensured that it was a pleasurable listening experience. Modern Praise and Worship music is critiqued for its entertainment value (Frame 1997: 59) and a supposed corresponding lack of spiritual depth. A similar view of the link between music, pleasure and therefore a paucity of critical engagement is noted by Pinker. According to him, music is auditory cheesecake, an exquisite confection crafted to tickle the sensitive spots of at least six of our mental faculties Pinker (1997: 3). He states that if music disappeared from our culture - nothing would be missing. This rather negative view of music fails to recognise music's role as a polysemic communicator. Furthermore, it could be argued that a small amount of cheesecake is appropriate in a balanced diet and adds to the pleasure of eating. The problem occurs when exquisite confection becomes the norm for the entirety of every meal.

I would argue that this was not the case at NWC. The Praise and Worship session lasted for around 40 minutes of a two-hour service. This was equally balanced by the delivery of the message, giving of notices, periods of prayer, communication of important church

information. This was unlike other Pentecostal environments that I have experienced in which Praise and Worship can last for two or three hours. Indeed, these additional activities may well be accompanied by music, but not to the same degree as observed in the Praise and Worship session. This ordering of the ritual activity was symptomatic of the carefully controlled management processes observed frequently at NWC and highly appealing to busy professionals who may not want to commit to spending several hours in church.

Therefore, the pleasure denoted in this ritual activity was encoded in the joy of participation, quality of musicianship and management of the experience. Much of the interaction I experienced at NWC encoded this level of pleasure which was celebrated and foregrounded. In his prayer at the end of the Praise and Worship session, Pastor Michael repeated the word 'pleasure' several times. He prayed that the days of pain would be over. There were few occasions where I witnessed the opportunity for lament or suffering. In a church where the emphasis is on wealth, health and prosperity a focus on these seemingly negative elements can appear to be counter to the theology. Therefore, much of the musicological material referenced the possibilities of pleasure, rather than the reality of pain or lament. As argued by McCoy in his theoretical exploration of the relationship between worship music and suffering

'When health and health become understood as inevitables of faith, the ongoing reality of suffering may become very difficult for otherwise faithful Pentecostals to express.' (McCoy 2015: 53).

Therefore, this loud, well executed, visually beautiful and sonically exhilarating performance typified much of the Praise and Worship at NWC. The timbre and visual arrangements of the music communicated pleasure, creating for its users the reality of the good life blessed by God.

Pentecostal Identity

Gilroy (1993) states that music is a mechanism for self-identity, and a number of theorists have made a link between the idea of the local, music and identity formation. Cooper (2004) states categorically that the local is site for identity formation. Whiteley gives a more cogent analysis, linking the local with space, which has particular resonance when considering congregational singing given its location in a particular physical and metaphysical space. She states,

‘Music, then, plays a significant part in the way that individuals author space, musical texts being creatively combined with local knowledges and sensibilities in ways that tell particular stories about the local, and impose collectively defined meanings and significance on space’ (Whiteley 2005: 4).

The suggestion here is that in a local space, one will find cultural products that are reflective of the ethnic background of the people. As noted in my ethnographic vignette, I was surprised at visiting NWC, that there were few signs within the auditory discourse of a West African identity. This of course coheres with Pastor Tayo’s pronouncement referred to earlier *‘we are not a Nigerian church, an African church or even a Black church’*. Working with Ingall’s (2008) definition of religious identity as a ‘shared cultural product, musical practice and site of religious experience’ (Ingalls 2008: 4), my suggestion here is that a ‘Pentecostal identity’ rooted in the Pentecostal ritual as discussed above trumps notions of an ethnic identity. Therefore, the experience of participating in the pleasurable Pentecostal ritual, enabled participants to perform a Pentecostal identity denuded of an explicit ethnic identity.

The Esthetic CCLI

In the next section I will explore Nattiez’s esthetic parameter, that is the Praise and Worship music as it is recreated by its users. Recognising this element as the point at which the music is brought into existence. As Hayward terms it:

‘its effects and relation on other works and sounds from the point of view of the personnel involved in its production’, (Hayward 1998: 9)

In order to explore this dimension, I have categorized and related the songs to their position in the CCLI database⁵⁹ and the Song Select website. Song Select is a CCLI initiative which allows paid up licensed members to download lyrics, chord sheets and sheet music for use in congregational singing. The CCLI data base provides the most reliable and systematic means of ascertaining popularity within congregational singing both in the UK and globally and is one of the few barometers that we have of analysing popularity in congregational singing. Indeed, as stated on their web site, CCLI allows users to:

‘Stay connected with what’s popular around the world, with new songs added weekly” (<https://songselect.ccli.com>).

Other UK charts in the Christian world include Itunes Christian and Gospel charts, the Step Fwd chart, and more recently the Official Christian and Gospel music charts, but these provide a measure of purchasing or in the case of A Step Fwd, an audience panel. The CCLI Song Select data base is a representation of the songs sung by congregations in receipt of a license, or of songwriters who have chosen to license their songs. The songs in the top 100 (<https://www.praisecharts.com/songs/ccli-top-100-songs/>) also included in table 1, 2 and 3 denotes global popularity. This does not provide the full picture as not all churches are registered as will be discussed below, but it does provide the most reliable data to which we have access. Furthermore, it is a methodology for assessing popularity that has been used elsewhere. (Sigler 2013, Walrath and Wood 2007, Ingalls 2016).

⁵⁹ In order to ascertain the songs positioning in the CCLI charts in 2011, I used <https://www.renewingworshipnc.org/2012/01/04/top-100-pc-2011/>

As one of my respondents stated, the songs in the Top 25 song charts published twice yearly since 1997, ‘... are the pop songs of the Christian world’ (Interview: Fletcher 2016). Much like the secular charts it is a means of identifying trends, developments and popularity. Popularity in this instance also indicates longevity as songs remain in the CCLI chart for an average of 9 years (Sigler 2013), which ensures some level of economic remuneration for creators who will continue to receive royalties while their material is being used.

Categorisation of Songs

In order to analyse the style of song, I have categorized them according to various genres⁶⁰. In Table 3 I used the following categories: Hillsong, Contemporary Christian Music (CCM), African American, 19th and 20th Century hymns and Caribbean/African. I have also colour coded the title of the song and the category assigned to show the allocations.

Table 3: Colour Coding by Genre

Hillsong
CMM
African American
19 th & 20 th Century Hymns
Caribbean/African

In a previous chapter, I outlined the background and context of CCM and Hillsong. Hillsong is part of CCM and is subsumed into this category for purposes of analysis below. However, in order to identify its dominance in the market place, in the table 3

⁶⁰ Genre is defined as ‘a set of musical events the character of whose articulation is governed by rules of any kind as they are accepted and embodied by a community’ (Fabbri and Shepherd 2003: 404 in Shepherd et al.). Clearly, meanings and definitions about music are unstable and contested in the Pentecostal Christian world as elsewhere. However, apart from the caveats for my categories for African-American, these categories are generally applied.

above, I have presented it as a single category.

I have also identified African American (AA) as a distinct category and have chosen not to include nomenclature 'gospel'. Gospel is a contested term, (as noted Chapter One) and the artists listed here could be defined as Praise and Worship, which could warrant inclusion in the CCM bracket. However, as stated in Chapter Two African American gospel music exists within a racial discourse, where it is often constructed as Black and CCM is constructed as white and marketed to those racial categories accordingly. (Banjo and Williams, 2011). Indeed, the songs included in this category are well established within the global recording sector and cohere with Pollard's (2008) assessment discussed in Chapter Two of AA artists writing Praise and Worship music. Nonetheless due to the significance of race in this discussion and the avoidance of Black as a homogenous category, it is necessary to separate African American as well as Caribbean and African.

The Caribbean/African classification refers to those songs that are I was unable to find in the either in the CCLI database, or on a YouTube search or that were written or recorded by a non-UK based African or Caribbean artist.

19th and 20th Century Hymns includes material written during that time, and 20th Century here means the early part of the period.

Finally, I have also inserted a percentage figure in the table to as a means of comparative analysis.

Table 4: Songs sung at NWC described in ethnographic vignette 5

Let the Glory of the Lord - Holland Davis - From the album Paula White and Friends, A
Time to Draw Near 2007 - CCLI database
I will Bless the Lord - Tye Tribbet - From the album G.A. & Tye Tribbett Victory Live !
2006
You Deserve the Glory and the Honour - Terry McAlmon - CCLI database
You are Alpha and Omega - Israel From the album Israel and New Breed, Live in South,
2010 - CCLI database
Holy, Holy Holy 1861 Text by Reginald Heber, Melody by John Bacchus Dyke

Table 5: Songs sung at NWC over a four-week period

- 1) Nothing is Impossible - Planet Shakers (Hillsong), 2011 Integrity Music, Song select database
- 2) Still - Hillsong Mighty to Save, 2007, Song select database
- 3) Hosanna, Paul Baloché No. 40 in CCLI chart
- 4) How Great is our God - Chris Tomlin The Essential Collection, 2011, No. 23 in CCLI chart
- 5) All Around - Israel Live from Another level, Israel and New Breed, 2010, Song Select
- 6) You are my hiding place -Maranatha The Silver Anniversary Project, 1996, Song Select
- 7) This is the Day – Fred Hammond, Free to Worship 2006
- 8) Come Bless the Lord – Israel, Live from another level, 2004
- 9) The Enemy's been defeated – Hillsong United, Look to You 2005
- 10) Your Blood speaks a better word – Matt Redman, Facedown 2004
- 11) Oh, the Blood of Jesus – traditional
- 12) I will bless you oh Lord – Esther Watanabe Song Select

Table 6: Songs sung in recorded service and over four-week period

Genre	Single Service	4-week period	Total
	Ethnography	12 songs	
	Vignette 5		
	5 songs		
Hillsong	0	4 - 33.3	4 - 24%
CCM	2 - 40%	4 - 33.3	6 - 35%
African American	2 - 40%	3 - 25	5 - 29%
19 th & 20 th Century Hymns	1 20%	1 - 8.3	2 - 12%
Caribbean/African	0		

The Dominance of the Recorded Text

The table above represents the songs sung in the recorded service and the repertoire over a four-week period between May and June 2011. The tabulation shows that the large majority of the songs were either identified in the CCLI top 100 songs during 2011, on the Song select database or in the recorded sector. All of these songs are representative of what may be defined as a standard Pentecostal repertoire - arguably typical of what may be encountered in many Pentecostal churches globally. Processes of production, distribution and consumption in the Christian recording industry work in the same way as in the secular recording industry and indeed, the Christian recording industry as stated in Chapter Two operates as a relevantly successful sub section of the global recording industry.

The hymnody in NWC is drawn from the recorded sector – with Hillsong Music (Australian) and Israel Houghton (USA) strongly evident - (Israel frequently performs with Hillsong and has in the past performed at NWC).⁶¹

During the period of cataloguing, there were no songs that could be identified as Caribbean or African and this includes British Caribbean or African. Indeed, there were no representation from any of the products from the Black British gospel industry referred to in Chapter One. Furthermore, over a six-month period of cataloguing songs, there was only one song that had been written internally. With a choir of some 50 participants and a highly accomplished worship team comprising some professional singers and musicians, there was a paucity of original material introduced or played. The dominant sound was a contemporary gospel reminiscent of recorded material. There was also little that could be identified as West African music. Interview material will be able to identify whether this is a deliberate strategy to self-identify as a ‘church for all nations.’

Other Spaces

There were, however other spaces where this strict adherence to the CCM repertoire was not observed. During the period of the research I attended smaller meetings, some mid-week and others in different venues in the church. At the time of research, the church had fifty-two cell groups meeting in London and Kent. Cell groups are mid-week meetings where congregational members living in close proximity have an opportunity to meet for Bible Study and fellowship. The meetings although informal had a structured format in

⁶¹ At a gospel music summit attended in November 2009, UK gospel promoters complained about the role played by African mega churches such as NWC and KICC. These churches have the resources to bring over popular African-America gospel artists, accommodate them in expensive hotels and then provide free gigs in their churches. The damage was twofold: they had taken over the role of UK promoters, putting them out of business and simultaneously destroyed the rather fragile UK gospel music industry and created a climate where consumers were reluctant to pay to see British artists.

that Praise and Worship was still central to the activity and always used to open and close the proceedings. The level of musical interaction was dependent on the skills of the cell group leader or other people in the group. During the period of the research, I attended two different groups. In the first group, the leader facilitated the group interaction by downloading backing tracks of many of the CCM songs sung in the main services, and the group sang along to the backing tracks. Needless to say, this was a fairly sterile experience. In the second group which I attended for a much longer period of time, the interaction was more organic and enjoyable. Although numbers were much smaller, with sometimes only 3 people in attendance, members were asked to volunteer songs and sung unaccompanied. In this context, I witnessed more African Praise and Worship choruses. You are the 'Most High God' by Junior Osbourne characterised by its hi life beat was a common favourite. Hymns were also the song of choice in many of these meetings.

Baptismal services which generally took place once per year in a smaller downstairs venue were another site where a more African repertoire was observed. The same level of protocol practised in the main service was not observed in these spaces. For example, ushers were present but not in uniform; special lighting and smoke machines were not used and the musicians were often not the same elite team that performed on a Sunday. Songs such as 'When Jesus says yes, nobody can say no' and 'Thank you, thank you, thank you Jesus, my Lord' and 'On the Mountain in the valley, on the land and in the sea'. I was unable to find recordings of these songs, but found the lyrics on the Nairaland forum website. Needless to say, these songs are not found on the CCLI website. The congregational interaction with these songs was freer and appeared to be less inhibited. People danced around the auditorium, waving handkerchiefs and generally there seemed to be a greater party atmosphere.

Attendance at only two different cell groups does not give insight to the common practice in these spaces across the whole church. Nonetheless, the interaction with the African repertoire was seen regularly in the smaller meetings, Friday nights prayer meetings and other meetings outside of the main Sunday service.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I established the context and background of the church by using a multimodal analysis. Multimodal semiotics understands that meaning is created through many semiotic resources (Kress 2010, Machin 2010). By analysing the location of NWC its architectural dominance on the landscape, the use of image, colour, words and the spatial arrangements of the interior. I have suggested that the semiotic resources create meaning which cohere with the notions of a mega church emphasizing prosperity. Yet, these processes and practices operate a duality in establishing the mega. The use of uniformed ushers, extensive technical infrastructure and regulated processes are a necessity in a mega church. You cannot manage 2,000-3,000 people during two services on a Sunday or stream live services on the Internet without clearly articulated management processes and a sophisticated technological infrastructure. Yet, these same processes and methods, and modes of selection also determine and condition the meaning-making processes. I have taken great care to outline this landscape of meaning to locate the environment in which the sounds are heard. Sounds are heard and understood within the context in which they are derived. Those contexts are environmental, social, cultural, political and of course religious. It is therefore of critical importance for one to bring together the visual and verbal semiotics in order to understand the musical semiotics. Tagg (2012) points out:

‘The semiotics of music, in the broadest sense of the term deals with the relations between the sounds we call musical and what those sounds signify to those producing and hearing the sounds in specific social cultural context’ (Tagg 2012: 145).

Tagg (2012) is arguing that we hear within a particular social and cultural context. We bring to our 'hearing' certain expectations and preconceptions of the type of sounds dictated by the environment.

Following this, I have analysed the role that the Praise and Worship plays in the setting. This esthetic component fulfils the role of providing a pleasurable ritual experience. Many writers critical of modern Praise and Worship music (Bowler and Reagon: 2014, Dawn1995, Woods and Walrath 2007), do not fully acknowledge the music's role as communicative for its users. Further exploration of the esthetic, using the barometer of the CCLI charts found that much of the repertoire is drawn from the global music industry and more reflective of a Pentecostal identity than an African church identity. These selections, however do not undermine its role as ritual. The song selections conform with Adedibu's (2012) description of the contemporary worship that is reflected across the key mega BMCs in London. This, in contrast to the other two groups which he identifies as 'traditionalists' and 'dual modal' churches. 'The 'traditionalist' songs, which he describes as:

'authentic, culturally meaning and facilitate limited or selective assimilation within the British culture' (Adedibu 2012: 146).

were heard in the smaller settings, suggesting a desire for the use of this material. The contemporary means of presentation, reserved for the Sunday service was in keeping with the churches' desire to be missional, accessible and modern. Furthermore, the pleasurable, and popular aspects cohere with the elements of a prosperity gospel which has little room for suffering or disappointment. Churches however, may be unaware that by supporting the pleasurable and the popular, they are sustaining and upholding international, global music industry networks to the detriment of a cultural product which may more fully resonate with their aesthetic desires and spiritual realities.

In the next chapter, I will analysis the immanent features of the songs sung in the service described in the ethnography.

CHAPTER SIX

THE IMMANENT ANALYSIS – THE MUSIC ITSELF

This chapter will present a musicological analysis of the songs sung in the Sunday morning service in April 2012, as represented in the ethnography in the previous chapter. Nattiez's immanent features, that is the 'music itself', also called the trace, are the sonic properties of the music which I have defined (for the purposes of this exercise) as the melody, rhythm, harmony and lyrics. This exploration is critical as it permits an analysis of the music, 'as music' and not merely reducing this most essential component to sociological or ideological factors. This approach recognises that music is a polysemic sign and is capable of communicating on a number of different levels.

A lack of space does not allow for a detailed exploration of all the elements of the music, however, I maintain that within the context of the discourse, the elements of melody, rhythm, harmony and lyrics are the most critical due to their prominence in the soundscape and for the communicative role played. An examination of these areas will help to identify the associations evoked by the musical language as well as identifying the commonalities and the gaps. I will communicate this musicological information by use of a graphic chart. The approach here is to identify possible links between the medium and the message (McLuhan 1964). I am trying to assert whether the grammar and syntax of the tones, rhythms and harmony point to any sociological or religious insights beyond the music. Such a stance assumes that music has a 'self'. The acoustic matter consisting of notes, scales, modes, harmony, rhythm, textures speak on their own terms. However, these combined elements are not divorced from the signifying practices that orientate

cultural behaviours. The sounds themselves are located in a social framework of education, culture and habit. The delineated meanings (Green 1988) implied by the auditory schema, are based on centuries of repetition and practise and have emerged over time through use (Machin 2010), and not through any notion of essential universalising configuration. However, such an approach does not undermine the study of notes or deny the power of subjective inherent meanings (Green 1988) but seeks to appreciate its role as a polysemic complex, sometimes contradictory auditory carrier. It is important, to therefore understand the musicology framework and observe their impacts in particular environments.

A Graphic Chart

As outlined in Chapter Four, in order to communicate my musicological findings, I will use a graphic chart rather than standard classical notation. Scholars (Middleton 2000: 104, Tagg 1982: 4) are critical of the use of notation as a means to appropriately translate the most significant features and timbres of popular music. Many of the scholars who have influenced my work such as Walser (1993) and Evans (2006) who write about music discourse use classical notation as a means of communication. However, while I acknowledge that this method is useful as a means of storage and distribution (Tagg 2012: 123), it also locates music as text and elevates it to the top of an ideological hierarchy enshrined in the exclusive domain of the specialist. As noted by Tagg:

‘Music’s relative isolation in our tradition of knowledge is partly due to a long history of institutional mystification’ (Tagg 2012: 130).

I pointed out at the start of this thesis the relative paucity of literature in regard to music in Pentecostalism generally and in BMCs specifically even though music in Pentecostalism is one of its most significant features. Therefore, although I am trained as a classical musician, I have chosen for two reasons not to use this technical and sometimes

alienating language to communicate my findings. Firstly, this language would not be understood by the large proportion of musicians within BMC environments who generally 'play by ear' and are not familiar with the language of notation, and secondly, I am hopeful that the use of a simple graphic chart will ensure that my work is accessible to a wider range of readers.

I have designed a colour coded chart to communicate and analyse the melodic profile of the songs sung in the service. The chart should be used in conjunction with the CD attached, this will give the reader both an opportunity to visualise and also to hear the musicological points that are being made.

The graphic charts represented by Tables 7 - 12 are a depiction of the melodic profile of the 5 songs sung in the service. Each of the seven colours, illustrates a note from the major scale, and corresponds with the colours of the rainbow. These colours in order are as follows: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo and violet. Therefore, red represents the first note of the scale, orange the second, yellow the third and so on. The colours red, orange, yellow correspond with do, re, me of the sol fa system as in the famous song of the same title from The Sound of Music. Using a familiar nursery rhyme such as Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star, represented as numbers would be: 1, 1, 5, 5, 6, 6, 5 and as colours would be red, red, blue, blue, indigo, indigo, blue. The purpose of the chart is not that it is used as a score from which one sings, but rather to help the reader identify the proximity of the notes in relation to one another.

Table 7: Key for Graphic Chart

	1 Red	
	2 Orange	
	3 Yellow	
	4 Green	
	5 Blue	
	6 Indigo	
	7 Violet	
	1 Red	

This is a highly stripped-down representation of the notes sung by the backing singers and the congregation. Limitations of the system are that, in a similar way to formal notation, it does not represent the more improvisatory role taken by the worship leader, where she slides in between the notes, singing complex, melodic phrases. Cusic (2002: 92) notes the difficulty of transcribing for the Black singer. Furthermore, this system cannot document or account for harmony, rhythm, texture or timbre. Nonetheless, the use of colour as a highly accessible medium works particular well for communicating the melodic profile, exposing the use of the major scale, and also for identifying the most prominent notes sung by the congregation.

Table 8: Let it Rise

1																	
7																	
6			glo	ry	of	the	Lord	ris	e								
5		the								a							
4	Let										mong						
3												u					
2												s					
1													First Line				
7													Repeat Second Line				
1						our											
7																	
6			pr	a	ises	of		King,	ris	e						Rise	
5		the									a		Third Line	it			
4	Let											mong	Let				
3																	
2																	
1																	
													one note changed				
	Let																
1													Fourth Line				
7			gl														

6				ory	of	the	Lord	ris e								
5									a							
4										mong						
3											u s					
2																
1																
										Rise	a	mong		us		it
3				ory	of			rd	r i			Sixth Line		us		it
2	Let	the	gl			the	Lo								let	rise
1																
7																
6																
5																
4																
3																
2																
1																
		Oh														
3	Oh															
2			oh													
1			Oh													
7					It											
6				Let		Rise										
5																
4																
3																

Table 9: Bless the Lord

1															
7															
6			bles s	the	Lord	Oh	my	soul	and	all			wit h	i n	
5		will										i s			m e
4	I										tha t				
3															
2															
1															
1															
7															
6															
5															
4	Bles s														
3		His													
2			Ho		name	Repea t									
1				ly											
7															
7															
6															
5									grea						

									t							
4				grea t												
3					thing s	He	ha s	don e		thing s						
2	He	has	don e													
1																
7																
7																
6				grea t												
5					thing s											
4	He	has	don e			Bless										
3							His									
2								Ho		name						
1									ly							
7																
7																
6	Hal	le		jah												
5					Hal	le		jah								
4			lu													
3							lu									
2																
1																

7															
6	Lord	You'r e	wor		of	the	glo								
5															
4				thy			ry								
3															
2															
1															
7															
6															
5	and	the	hon		hal	le	lu								
4															
3				our			jah								
2															
1															
7															

Table 10: You Deserve the Glory

7														
6		De	serve		glo									
5														
4	You			the		ry								
3														
2														
1														
7														
7														
6		th	hon											
5														
4	and			our										
3														
2														
1														
7														
7														
6		we	fill											
5				our	hand									
4	so				s	in	wor							
3								ship						
2														
1														
7														
6						ly	nam							
5			prais		ho		e							
4		we		you										
3	as			r										
2														
1														
						mi								
2	You		great	you	do		ra	cles		grea				
										t				

1		ar						s					
7		e						o					
6													
5													
4													
3													
2													
1													
			no										
2		is		one	else			is	no				
1	Ther									on	els		
	e									e	e		
7							you	Ther				lik	
								e				e	
6						lik							yo
						e							u
5													
4													
3													
2													
1													
						mi							
2	You		great	you	do		ra	cles		grea			
										t			
1		ar							s				
		e							o				
7													
6													
5													
4													
3													
2													
1													
			no										
2		is		one	else				is	no			yo
													u
1	Ther										on	els	lik
	e										e	e	e
7							you	Ther					
								e					
6						lik							
						e							
5													
4													

Table 11: You are Alpha and Omega

7													
6													
5							me						
4			Al	ph a		O		ga					
3		Are			an d								
2	Yo u												
1													
7													
7		wo r											
6	we												
5			shi p										
4													
3				yo u			you				to		
2					oh			ar e		thy		praise d	
1						Go d			wo r			be	
7													
				all									
1			you		the								
7		giv e				glo			wo r				
6	We						ry	we					
5										shi p			
4													
3											yo u		
2												ou r	
1													God
7													

1													
7													
6													
5													
4	Yo u												
3					to								
2		are		thy			praise d						
1			wor			be							
7													

Table 12: Holy, Holy, Holy

1												
7							Lor d	God	Al			
6					Ho	ly				mig h		
5												
4			Ho	ly							ty	
3												
2	Ho	ly										
1												
					mor n							
1				th e		ing						
7			in							rise		
6	Ear	ly					my		sh all		to	the e
5												
4												
3								song				
2												
1												
1												
7							Lor d	God	Al			
6					Ho	ly					mig h	
5												
4			Ho	ly								ty
3												
2	Ho	ly										
1												
	Go d											
1												
7				pe r								
6		i n	thre e									
5						bles s						
4					sons							

3							ed	Tri				
2									ni	ty		
1												

Melody

The songs sung in the service presented in ethnographic vignette 5 and over the period of the fieldwork were characterized by their use of melody. Melody performs a primary function in music. Tagg (in Shepherd et. al. 2003) defines melody in the western tradition as having the following characteristics: it moves in a step-like fashion; it is easy to imitate and recall; most melodies have a length of 2 – 10 seconds; they are delivered at the rate of medium to slow speech; they have an unbroken and smooth delivery; they use simple and tonal vocabulary and they span less than an octave – that is 8 notes. All of these elements were identified in the melodies. The close proximity of the notes is indicated on the graphic chart. This scalar movement ensures that the contour of the melody contains a minimum of intervals making the songs simple in construction and therefore easy to remember. The graphic chart demonstrates that the final song Holy, Holy, Holy a traditional hymn⁶² written in the nineteenth century is the only one in the list that does not conform to this typography.

The extensive use of melody in this environment is important because popular melody is of the everyday. It can be easily adopted for pleasure and can function as a means of release (Stefani 1987). Melodies are accessible by all - they need no additional equipment, no specific expertise and no prior knowledge. They contain a dialectic, simultaneously belonging to all and belonging to no one. People may hum, whistle, sing a tune while ignorant of its origin, making it their own, even disrespectful of the original. Melodies are involving, often implicating you against your will. As Schafer points out, we have no ear lids: we are condemned to listen (Schafer in Bull and Berg: 2003: 25) and, therefore, to participate or not. In the services that I attended, the melodies, appeared to pick up the majority of congregation members and carry them along. Rapt facial

⁶² Holy, Holy, Holy was written by Reginald Heber in 1827. The poet Tennyson praised its meter. (Bryant:1999)

expressions seemed to imply

‘...an immediate sense of involvement – absorbed, aroused, captivated, desirous’ (Kramer 2002:278).

Another element relating to the portability of the melody is the use of ‘hooks’. According to Shepherd (2003), a hook is a short, repeating melodic phrase which is ‘instantly recognizable in popular consciousness’ Shepherd (in Shepherd, Horn et. al. 2003: 563). Kasha and Hirschon (1979) identify three elements as germane, firstly a compelling rhythm, secondly, they are memorable, and thirdly they always relate to a lyric, an action or a person. Adorno (1941) scathing in his attack on popular music described the hook as the snare used to ensnare the masses. Clearly, hooks play both a commercial and aesthetic function. They are a device used by songwriters to ensure popularity and commercial success, but they also fulfil the desire on the part of the consumer to engage with something that is safe and familiar. In applying this to singing in a mega church environment – the appeal is easy to see. This aspect of pleasure in the melody directly relates to the pleasure referred to a previous chapter. Singing melody in a congregational environment is a pleasurable endeavour. Simple melodies allow immediate participation and create excitement, particularly when shared in a corporate environment, as seen on the football terraces. Several hundred voices in a mega church joined together in melody is an important part of the appeal of the church. This engenders a sense of ‘imagined’ community (Anderson 1983).

Instrumental music – that is, music performed by the band, not as backing to singing, but as an accompaniment to specific activities for example, taking of the offering, at the beginning and at the end of a service; when people are arriving, or leaving, and occasionally as an accompaniment to the sermon is very rarely music that is not a song.⁶³

⁶³ During the period of the fieldwork, I only heard instrumental music executed as a performance activity on two occasions. The first was a Christmas celebration where a pianist played a classical piece, by way of

Clearly the prominence of the words in a song is of significance here, and will be discussed later. The significance of the extensive use of melody acts therefore, as embodiment of the word, and provides an opportunity for its execution. The focus here is on melody, rather than the act of singing because it is the characteristics of melody that enable singability within this context.

Use of the Major

The use of the graphic chart show that the songs sung in the service were in a major key. The major, or diatonic scale is a pattern of 8 notes, (the first and last note are the same – separated by an octave, as indicated in the use of the colour red for the top and bottom of the scale in the key in Table 7) made up of tones and semitones. This formulation, along with the minor scale, constitute the core foundation of Western harmonic construction. It is generally acknowledged within Western music that major sounds are associated with positive feelings, i.e., joy, confidence, love, triumph and minor keys with sorrow, fear, hate and disquiet (Cooke 1959). As already stated, these associations are not natural or inherent, but have developed over a period of time by long association ⁶⁴ (Machin 2010).

The graphic charts indicate a predominance of the colours, red, yellow and blue. In technical terms these refer to notes, 1, 3, and 5 of the major scale, emphasising chord 1. Table 13 indicates how frequently these notes are used. With a total of 258 notes, the use of 1, 3 and 5 are the highest used and equal 62%. This use of the major scale creates a strong tonal, unambiguous feel to the music.

displaying the versatility of the team, and secondly on the occasion of Greenwich acquiring the status of Royal Borough. On this occasion, a brass band from the military were invited to contribute to a special concert.

⁶⁴ Cooke (1959) provides a fascinating historical account of the interval of the major 3rd. He points out that prior to the Renaissance, church composers used predominantly minor chords. Use of the major was considered a dissonance and disallowed due to its association with pleasure and happiness. Clerics felt that the use of the major was undermining of a godly existence and a serious approach to life. It was during the Enlightenment that this approach changed.

Table 13: Use of the Major Scale

Note	Colour	Let it Rise	Bless the Lord	You Deserve the Glory	Alpha and Omega	Holy, Holy, Holy	Total
1	Red	10	7	25	6	8	56
2	Orange	9	8	6	6	3	32
3	Yellow	10	12	10	4	6	42
4	Green	5	14	4	3	1	27
5	Blue	18	20	5	4	14	61
6	Indigo	2	0	5	4	9	20
7	Violet	1	2	10	5	2	20
Total							258

Machin (2010) relates that the use of these notes in the melody enables an ‘easy’ or rounded feeling avoiding tension and trouble. Notes outside of the scale imply dissonance or more complex approaches to the melody. While a more intricate sophistication is evident in the melisma executed by the worship leader and the harmonic constructions of the keyboard player they are not required by the congregation. An emphasis on songs using major rather than minor keys further help to underline and convey the positivity and pleasure of a prosperity environment.

Rhythm

A technical definition for rhythm is as follows:

‘When applied to music, the term ‘rhythm’ refers to the relations that obtain in time between identifiable individual sonic events having perceived durations’ (Strain in Shepherd, Horn et.al. 2003: 612).

Evans’ definition is more helpful in conveying the meaning in everyday language, he

describes as

‘the total rhythmic bed combines to produce the groove of the song’ (Evans 2006: 112).

It is these grooves or beats that give music its structure, its danceability. It is one of the most significant areas of popular music, and possibly the most difficult to convey visually to the non-musician. Hence it will be necessary to refer to the enclosed CD for the next section.

The characteristic feature of much of the music played in the service was its syncopation. Often the band played off the beat, and the stabs and accents become the feature of the song. The use of jazz fusion licks reminiscent of Earth, Wind and Fire and hi-life sounds transformed the songs from a simple rock beat to more energetic up-tempo sounds. Even in the slow tempos songs with a straight beat, the rhythm played a key role in driving the music forward building to a climactic crescendo.

Harmony

Harmony in music comes from the Latin ‘harmonia’, meaning an agreement of sound and is defined by the:

‘simultaneous soundings of notes to produce chords and chord sequences’ (Tagg in Shepherd, Horn et al. 2003: 533).

Following the relatively straightforward melodic profile, the harmonic construction was complex. Like the vast majority of Western music since 1700, both classical and popular music is based on the circle of fifths, built on the basis of tension and relaxation. In technical terms this is the dominant, chord 5, moving to the tonic, chord 1. When we hear chord 5 we expect a resolution to chord 1, – if we do not hear this we are disappointed, and the expectation is not fulfilled. Small (1998) points out that people may think that they do not understand tonal harmony, analogous to sexual tension and release, but it is

natural to them because they are so used to hearing it. Popular music relies on this predictability and much of the music played at NWC relied on the circle of fifths.

Within the NWC context the keyboard was responsible for fulfilling this role as there was no guitarist. There were generally two keyboard players. The first with the predominant responsibility for the musical direction of the band. This critical role necessitates the first keyboard player as a highly proficient musician. The harmony executed by the keyboards, along with the rhythm (bass and drums) play the significant role of communicating the style of the music. It is the selection of chords and voicings that identify this as a Black church. Mindful of charges of essentialism, there is often a difference in the sound of a Black church and the sound of a white church even though they may both share a Pentecostal orientation. So, while notions of a Black aesthetic in music are highly contentious (Frith 1981: 16, Tagg: 1989, Gilroy 1993: 71) and problematic as pointed out in Chapter 2, scholars writing about BMCs have adopted the essentialist approach in arguing that these churches have a distinctive musical style. It is normative to assert that in BMCs the worship styles are generally more exuberant, louder and more physical. Congregations in BMCs often dance to the music. Differences can also be identified in the sound of the music by the use of more complex extended chords. One of my respondents Chris Williams, whose role as Head of Customer Relations at CCLI involved him travelling to a number of Black and white churches described it in this way.

'Musicianship in the Black churches is 10 times higher than it in the white churches. You'll get a nice lady sitting on the piano inside a Methodist church playing ...very well. (However), some of the churches I go to are breath-taking. They take a 'Light of the World', Tim Hughes, and you'll listen to the chord structures and the music and you're going, that's not how it sounds. And they've added to it, they've recreated it, rearranged it' (Interview: Williams 2016).

Williams here is talking about how Black church musicians alter the music. They take the straightforward chords that are recorded on albums and make them more complicated.

This process was observed in the harmonic arrangements at NWC. So, despite the emphasis on Hillsong and CCM identified in the previous chapter, it was clear that whenever songs from this repertoire were utilised, amendments were made to the stylistic execution. The soft rock, guitar feel identified in much of Hillsong's recorded music was slightly toned down or mitigated with the use of a reggae, hi-life or RnB beat combined with greater use of altered and jazz chords. A similar process was observed by one of the members of the Praise and Worship team who also noted this Blackenising in the sound of the voice.

"Because even the Hill Song(s) stuff we do I still feel we make it Black. We don't make it so hill songy that it -- you feel like it's all English people singing. We always do -- I don't know. It seems to always -- because we sing different. Just how we sing a song is still different because a lot of the songs, the Hillsong stuff that we do, that I listen to them and the English voices are so much -- they've got a pureness -- not that our voice isn't pure, but there's a difference in how they sing a particular note and we sing it different. I don't know why, it just sounds different. You can tell it's a Black person singing it." (Interview: Reid 2013)

These combined factors of the harmony, rhythm, sound of the voice and performance elements are encoded as 'Black' and therefore signature troupes of a BMC. All of these elements were brought together in another Black church troupe used in the music known 'the Shout' or sometimes called the 'praise break.' While this was not demonstrated in the service under discussion, it was observed several times during the period of data collection. This is a moment of ecstatic praise where the drums play a very fast off beat rhythm, while the keyboard uses the harmonic ascending articulation to take the congregation to an emotional climax of shouting and praising.

The term 'Blackenizing' seems relevant here. Costen (1993) uses this term to describe how African Americans changed the structure of Euro American hymns and reshaped them in a folk-like manner to make them more accessible to the social and spiritual needs of the singers Costen (1993: 98). Smith (1998) uses the term in a more prescriptive

manner describing how a very deliberate process involves changing the rhythm, texture and harmonic structure of a piece to sonically stamp a difference and separation from white hymnody. She identifies that this 'Blackenizing' makes it part of the community's expression and gives it a new immediately recognisable identity (Smith: 1998: 73). This process of 'Blackenizing' is not the same in every social and historical context, but it marks a deliberate and essential process of imposing a different musical identity on found material to make it different. So, while many of the songs were relatively simply using stepwise movements in the bass, it is the use of the chordal structures played by the keyboard and syncopated rhythms in the drums that creates the complexity and process of 'Blackenizing'. However, it is to be noted that the 'Blackenizing' in this instance in most cases mostly reference an African American sound, rather than a West African sound.

The chordal progressions, rhythmic features, the voicings in the harmony and the use of the 'shout' are reminiscent of African-American popular contemporary Christian music. This of course, shares features in common with and is derived from African music, but the commercial representation of that form is now rooted in large corporate media networks. This is further demonstrated in the cataloguing of the songs in the last chapter. Of the 5 songs sung in the single service, 2 out of 5 were categorized as African-American, and over the four-week period 3 out of 12 songs, giving an overall total of 29% for the period studied. As noted during this period there were no songs written by African, Caribbean or UK Black artists. While there were signs that identified the church sonically as a Black church, within the Sunday mornings services there was less evidence of the sound of an African church. The 'Blackenization' that occurred in this context relied on a replication of a global, commercialised form of Blackness filtered through media networks and not an Africanisation of Blackness.

Lyrics

The fifth feature of consideration in the 'music itself' is the lyrics. The question that we are trying to address here is: can lyrics provide an insight to meaning-making processes? And if so, how significant are these insights? This is a site of contention between sociologists and musicologists. Frith (1989) highly critical of early sociologists, argue that they lacked a language for musical analysis and therefore chose to concentrate solely on the words, using content analysis as a methodology. Middleton (1990) avers the easy connections that are made by using content analysis. In referring to popular music, the identification of simple and banal words was seen as denotative of a simple, cultural and psychological state of society. Middleton (1990) argues that this simple quantitative approach cannot serve to capture the more complex meanings embedded in the marriage of words and music. When speaking of words in connection with music – we use the term 'lyrics' to denote musical words. These are words that do not function in the same way as other scripted words. Lyrics are musical components of the text, and therefore need to be analysed within the context of the musical text. Therefore, the language of popular music may well be simplistic, even nonsensical, e.g. A-wop-bop-a-loo-lop a-lop bam boo (Tutti Frutti by Little Richard) (Middleton: 1990). But music permits a means of

'invest(ing) the banal with affective force and kinetic grace' Middleton (1990: 229).

Lyrics and music are both signifying systems which are dialectically entwined. Lyrics play a role musically and music plays a role lyrically.

Furthermore, it is also important to understand the work carried out by lyrics and music in different contexts and within different genres. While acknowledging the use of lyrics in popular song may sometimes be banal and simplistic, it is important to acknowledge the role of the word in religious liturgy. There is no religion, where chant and music do not play a role (Beck 2006). Central to most traditional evangelical Christian gospel is the

text. The biblical text states:

‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.’ (John 1: 1 KJV)

The function of music with words, i.e. songs within a religious community is not primarily an aesthetic activity – it is as an act of worship and liturgy. Music with words are de rigueur in this setting. Indeed, in Pentecostal Black church music, it is often difficult to identify the sounds themselves as sacred or secular, sacralisation is attained through the text - Dorsey, Father of Gospel Music, identified it thus:

‘The only thing about all the music is the words are different, see. You use different words and then you take that blue moan and what they call the low-down feeling tunes, and then you shape them up and put them here and make them serve the other purpose, the religious purpose’ (Thomas Dorsey cited in Harris 1992: 100).

Lyrics in Christian music are the key signifier and therefore of critical importance as a meaning-making device within the semiosphere of signs.

I have used content analysis to help identify the lyrics that are words – hence identifying their function as words, and also exploring how these words are used. While acknowledging that the use of content analysis may be regarded as descriptive and unsatisfactory as a means of capturing some of the more sophisticated nuances contained in data, I believe that its function as one method amongst many in this context is an effective means of quantifying certain elements and qualifying thematic gaps and revealing further musical troupes.

In addition to this Evans (2006: 113) points out that the lyrics are connected with the immanent level as a space where all three elements of the musical discourse are realised. The lyrics are mediated by the music, that is the immanent level to the esthetic level, imposing directly on the experience of the worshipper. Lyrics are also brought into existence by this association of Praise and Worship due to this singular perimeter. Non-

Christian lyrics are by definition not related to the genre of Praise and Worship.

I have used the following tables, to present the findings from the content analysis to display variables regarding numbers of lyrics, length, address, use of pronouns, subject matter, call and response and position in service. Two systems have been combined for this purpose. Firstly, Evan's (2006) analysis of congregational music where he categorises congregational songs according to their type.⁶⁵ While there is a good deal of overlap in some of the categories, and some songs could feasibly be classified in a number of different areas, the schema is nonetheless useful for identifying the gaps.

Following Evans (2006), I have also identified whether the first person, or collective pronoun is used. Praise and Worship music is frequently critiqued for its emphasis on the individual (Dawn 1995: 2). Prosperity gospel is also critiqued for the same reason (Hunt 2002: 100, Perriman 2003: 205, Wiegler in Attanasi and Yong 2012: 171). This analysis will determine whether this is the case. I have also used Machin's (2010) schema for critical discourse analysis which attempts to understand how meanings are communicated in popular music lyrics. The activity schema at its simplest level tells the story of the song, by identifying the participants, activity and agency and setting. Subsequent to this, I will explore the gaps and the silences in the material. This level of interrogation will be helpful in critiquing the polysemic discourses that are mediated through this lyrical data.

⁶⁵ The categories used are as follows: anointing, body unity, call to worship, children's communion, confessional, creedal, eschatological, evangelistic, holiness, intimacy/relational, judgement, salvation (Christology, social justice, spirit, testimony, thanksgiving, transformation/dedication (Evans 2006: 114).

Table 14: Summary of Content Analysis: Let the Glory of the Lord Rise

Total number of different lyrics	17
Total number of lyrics	522
Percentage variation in lyrics	3%
Most dominant lyric	Rise x 83
Length of song	6.30 mins
Song addressed to	God/King/Lord/You
First person pronoun	None
Collective pronoun	Us
Verbs	Rise
Type	Anointing
Repetition	√
Call and Response	√
Position in service	First Song
Critical Discourse Analysis CDA 1) 'activity schema' - 2) Participants 3) Activity and agency 4) Setting	Command for God's spirit to be released. The song is not a request but appears to put the onus of the rising on the congregation – entreating them to enable the glory to be something that they control. This switches half way through the song – where the shift to 'let your glory rise'. The participants are God and us. The assumption about the 'us' is that we are all believers – this identifies it as a song for insiders. Ambiguous about where – but the location at the start of the service could imply a release of the spirit in the service.
Thematic Gaps	Political, social, environmental concerns. Negative emotions, such as fear, disappointment or sadness.

Table 15: Summary of Content Analysis: Bless the Lord

Total number of different lyrics	38
Total number of lyrics	522
Percentage variation in lyrics	7%
Most dominant lyric	Hallelujah
Length of song	6.35
Song addressed to	Self/God
First person pronoun	I/my/me
Collective pronoun	None
Verbs	Be; praise; clap; dance
Type	Intimacy/Relational
Repetition	√
Call and Response	√
Position in service	Second song
Critical Discourse Analysis CDA 1) 'activity schema' 2) Participants 3) Activity and agency 4) Setting	Song is an imperative to the self to praise God, and a recognition of the good things that God has done. The song gives permission to engage in bodily praise by dancing and clapping.

Thematic Gaps	Political, social, environment concerns. Negative emotions, such as fear, disappointment or sadness.
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Table 16: Summary of Content Analysis: You Deserve the Glory

Total number of different lyrics	52
Total number of lyrics	400
Percentage variation in lyrics	13%
Most dominant lyric	You x 50
Length of song	4.49 mins
Song addressed to	You, Lord, Him, Jesus
First person pronoun	None
Collective Pronoun	We
Verbs	Deserve, lift, worship, bless, sing, are, like
Type	Holiness
Repetition	√
Call and Response	√
Position in service	Third
Critical Discourse Analysis CDA 1) 'activity schema' - 2) Participants 3) Activity and agency 4) Setting	This song praises God for his holiness and greatness. The participants are us and God in the present.
Thematic Gaps	Political, social, environment concerns. Negative emotions, such as fear, disappointment or sadness.

Table 17: Summary of Content Analysis: You are Alpha and Omega

Total number of different lyrics	21
Total number of lyrics	188
Percentage variation in lyrics	11%
Most dominant word	30
Length of song	4.49
Song addressed to	Alpha, Omega, Lord, You,
First person pronoun	I, my
Collective pronoun	We
Verbs	Praise, worship
Type	Holiness
Repetition	√
Call and Response	√
Position in service	Fourth song
Critical Discourse Analysis CDA 1) 'activity schema' - 2) Participants 3) Activity and agency 4) Setting	Alpha and Omega denote the first and the last letter of the Greek alphabet. This song, referring to God as such, offers Praise and Worship on behalf of the believer. There are no references to the setting.
Thematic Gaps	Political, social, environment concerns. Negative emotions, such as fear, disappointment or sadness

Table 18: Summary of Content Analysis: Holy, Holy, Holy

Total number of different lyrics	23
Total number of lyrics	146
Percentage variation in lyrics	16%
Most dominant word	Holy x 19
Length of song	4.06 mins
Song addressed to	You, God Almighty, Trinity
First person pronoun	My x 3
Collective Pronoun	None
Verbs	Are, shall
Type	Holiness
Repetition	√
Call and Response	√
Position in service	Final song before the preaching starts
Critical Discourse Analysis CDA 1) 'activity schema' - 2) Participants 3) Activity and agency 4) Setting	This song refers to the attributes of God on behalf of the believer. The suggestion is that praise to God should occur in the mornings.
Thematic Gaps	Political, social, environment concerns. Negative emotions, such as fear, disappointment or sadness.

Content Analysis - Repetition

It is clear from the tabulation of the material that repetition is a dominant feature in the songs. This repetition takes a number of forms. It is repetition of verses, phrases and words. The use of content analysis graphically displays the level of repetition in the words. The total number of words divided by the total number of different lyrics indicates that a minimal number of words are used, and they are used repeatedly. Reagon and Bowler (2014: 209) note a similar point in their research on the use of Praise and Worship music in US mega churches. They identify the phrase '7/11' that is 7 words that are repeated 11 times. While it was not precisely the same at NWC in the first song – 'Let the Glory of the Lord' the total number of different lyrics - 17 -times by the total number of sung lyrics 522 gives a percentage of 3% variation in difference and hence 97%

repetition. Of a total of 522 words – ‘let’ and ‘rise’ are repeated 105 and 83 times respectively (see Table 14). This first song has the highest degree of repetition. It is perhaps unsurprising the song with the lowest degree of repetition is the nineteenth century hymn Holy, Holy, Holy which has a variation percentage of 16%. It should also be noted that this traditional hymn has 4 verses (www.hymnary.org/text/holy_holy_holy_lord_god_almightly_early) of which only one verse was sung in the recorded service. Had the hymn been sung in its entirety, variation would increase.

Repetition was also observed in the confessional chants referred to in my last chapter and are characteristic of this environment. Repetition can of course be viewed both positively and negatively. On one hand, this lack of variation in the Praise and Worship songs, and hence simplicity, appears to cohere with Dawn’s (1995) concern regarding the lack of intellectual rigour with little requirement from congregations. Similar to an interpretive lens that views repetition in popular music in late capitalist societies as a means of standardisation and indicative of political economy and loss of self (Adorno 1941). On the other hand, this form of repetition termed ‘musematic’ by Middleton (1990) in oral composition enables a space for emotional release and spiritual ecstasy. Rather than imposing standardisation, repetition in this environment permits freedom, releasing the brain from the tyranny of words to a space whereby spiritual epiphany can be achieved. And as noted by Evans (2006: 116) fewer words in a song does not necessarily lessen its impact.

Within a mega church environment, this level of repetition plays a key role in enabling participation and familiarity. The words projected on a large screen, negate the use of hymn books, mean that congregants can quickly learn the songs, participate even if new to the environment. However, repetition is a key feature not only of mega church settings,

but many more evangelical settings with which I am familiar. Churches influenced by Pentecostal worship tend to repeat choruses, lines of choruses or individual works. The level of repetition may differ according to the context, but repetition is a key feature in many Christian environments. However, repetition in this environment can additionally serve to reinforce and underline the dominant theology.

Call and Response

Much of the repetition created is due to the use of call and response. Call and response, both musical - contained in the songs, and spoken, are features throughout the service and characterizes the environment. Positive confessions are read by the minister and throughout the sermon there are frequent invitation to repeat words and phrases. Beckford (1998) identifies this type of interaction as having its origins in traditional African societies and it is often claimed to be indicative of African American music (Levine 2006 in Beck cites that it is also used in the Old Testament). It is also a feature that relates to the 'Blackenizing' referred to above. While it may be critiqued for its 'Simple Simon' approach - call and response as a participatory activity constructs an aesthetic experience. Frith (1996) refers to it as music's ability to create experience by putting on subjective and collective identity – it helps to build a sense of community, albeit imagined. It assists individuals to get to themselves 'as groups' by participation. (Frith 1996) Call and response creates interaction between congregation and the worship leader, enabling play and pleasure.

This activity could also point to the difference between an audience and congregation. As noted in the ethnography, some attendees at the service chose not to participate in the activity. This could be viewed as a continuum whereby attendees begin as audience but are drawn into the congregation through the act of call and response. As demonstrated

on the enclosed CD, this process enables a 'toing and froing' between the congregation and worship leader. They create a joint composition inviting a sense of play and fun. The repetition of words and phrases, argues Southern 'help to create an emotional impact on both the singer (leader and choir) and the congregation.' Southern (1983: 333) This experience is intensified in a mega church environment.

The length of song is significant as is the amount of time allocated to congregational singing. In the service, 5 songs were sung in the worship section. The worship sessions form one of the key activities alongside preaching, notices, welcoming and the giving of offering. Congregational singing accompanies the latter two of these activities and may occasionally form a soundscape for the preacher. Congregational singing was a key feature in the morning service perhaps rivalled only by the preaching. Of the five songs, the longest lasted 6.35 minutes and the shortest 3.39 minutes. While the musical structures of the songs were quite simple – mostly consisting of a binary structure of A, B – it was the process of repetition that gives the songs their length. The practice of repetition is quintessential of Pentecostal services. Singing a chorus once or twice is rare. The length of the song appears to entreat engagement with the transcendent and is a key activity.

Typology of Songs

It is worth pointing out at this stage that a snapshot of a single service does not provide a rigorous overview of songs on a weekly basis. Nonetheless, it gives some insights into the general approaches. The songs sung in the documented service were reflective of weekly practice. These songs conformed with Evans' (2016) classification of song types as Anointing, Intimacy and Holiness. According to Evans' typology - Anointing songs summon the Holy Spirit; Holiness songs focus on God the Father and Intimacy songs

focus on the relationship of the believer to God the Father. Contrary to Evans' (2006) assertion regarding the prominence of the first-person pronoun, the content analysis revealed an emphasis on the collective pronoun, and God and Lord. Verbs such as praise, bless, dance and clap emphasize worship as an embodied activity and encouraged worshippers to physically participate in the activity. The songs could all be identified as 'insider' songs – sung by and for the congregation. All of these ideas confirm the work of the lyrics in regard to the Pentecostal ritual experience.

These thematic analyses also indicate the gaps, and in the documented service there were no references to political, environmental or social justice. Furthermore, ideas relating to negative emotions, disappointment and suffering were omitted. Similar findings concerning Praise and Worship music have been confirmed by Evans (2006: 133) and Howard (2007: 65) and Porter (2007: 90). And it was one that I was aware of throughout the time of the fieldwork. I pointed out in an earlier chapter that the church although engaged in many civic tasks and were well known in the locality for the social and community work had largely adopted an apolitical role. The omission referred to in the lyrical material was also observed in the sermons. Hence the musical discourse although fulfilling its role as Pentecostal liturgy was unable to address the more difficult areas of individual and community reality only providing an outlet for positivity.

Use of Language

It is notable that all of the songs sung in the service were in English, and this was the case throughout the duration of the fieldwork. This differed to other smaller African churches that I visited that held bilingual services or sang songs in the native language of the congregation. There were infrequent occasions when the song 'Baba Oshe' was sung. This firstly in Yoruba, followed by English and then French and Spanish. The use of

the English language was in keeping with the quote from Pastor Tayo already referenced decrying a West African ethnicity. And although it was evident that this was the dominant population, a number of different groups were represented in the membership and the church had aspirations of being viewed as international. Singing in English can therefore be viewed as a unifying factor, a means of bringing all groups together and announcing to the indigenous population that we are a church open to outsiders. However, it also clearly establishes non-alliance with a specific African identity.

Conclusion

In this chapter I have used a musicological analysis to demonstrate the communication of the music on its own terms. The use of the graphic charts showed that many of the songs sung in the service portrayed in the ethnography in the previous chapter consisted of simple memorable tunes in the major mode used to convey happiness and feelings of positivity. The rhythm and the harmony on the other hand emphasised elements often associated with a Black church aesthetic by means of complex rhythms and harmonies executed by the Praise and Worship team. Other musical elements, such as call and response, repetition, serve to reinforce the religious message. And finally, the lyrics emphasise the role of Pentecostal liturgy as described in the previous chapter. Apart from a lack of attention to socio-political issues or negative connotations there were little direct correlation with song lyrics that explicitly emphasised a prosperity gospel. There were occasions when songs such as Israel Houghton's 'I am Blessed' which articulates prosperity in every area of life were sung but this did not occur during the field work collection. I contend that uplifting rousing worship in a prosperity setting is an important part of the aesthetic of the church but may not be exclusive to these settings. Indeed, as demonstrated in Chapter Three vibrant and inspiring music is *de rigueur* in Pentecostal environments. Although argued by Bowler of prosperity churches,

'Music cultivated the atmosphere in which people could name their desire' (Bowler

I maintain that a multimodal analysis demonstrates that the combination of the sounds, lyrics and execution within a physical environment supported and undergirded by confessions, sermons and other vocal declarations, inform and influence the ideology of a prosperity gospel. The music, although central, does not operate in isolation, neither is it a singular factor. It works in concert with other signs in the environment. The combination of the words and the music convey the music's role as music and as popular Black church music. The research also discovered that there were ambiguities over the notion of a Black aesthetic. On one hand, there was the celebration and embracing of certain types of harmonies and rhythms drawn from an African American commercial repertoire. But also evident was the negation and suppression of a specifically African sound in others, therefore, problematizing the notion of Black in the environment. In the next chapter, I will tell the story of the evolution of music in the church through the voices of the Praise and Worship team, that is Nattiez's poietic element, and explore some of these ideas further.

CHAPTER SEVEN

THE POIETIC ANALYSIS – NAVIGATING THE POLE OF PROSPERITY

In Chapter 5 using Bowler's (2013) analysis of hard and soft prosperity, I demonstrated how NWC exemplified adherence to a hard prosperity through sermons and internal documents. In this chapter, using interview material from the Praise and Worship team, chanted confessions and church documents, I will show how a gentler version of prosperity, i.e. a soft prosperity is operationalised through this team. The Praise and Worship team conform to Nattiez's poietic category as the producers of the music. Arguably members of the team are simultaneously receivers and producers. As members of the team, they engage in their duties, once or twice per month, and the remainder of the time is spent as members of the congregation. Their input could be analysed from both angles. However, their primary role as agents for bringing the symbolic entity into being, sheds important insights into how the musical discourse is mediated in the congregation. In a previous chapter I have used the esthetic category to refer to the CCLI chart as representative of the Christian global music industry. This gave an analysis of how the songs are brought into being and given status by an external framework. This definition of the poietic in this chapter renders a more intimate portrayal of the musical discourse as I use the words and experiences of the people engaged in the delivery to tell the story of the musical discourse in the church.

The Praise and Worship team, as producers of music in the church, provide a significant representation of the church. The oral, visual, and visceral encounter will be one of the

first impressions that greets a visitor as they enter the auditorium. This oral, visual and visceral encounter also acts as a placeholder for the prosperity gospel. As discussed in the last chapter, music is central to the worship activity, and therefore it is important that the music confirms and reinforces the message of hard prosperity. Sermons will be topped and tailed, and sometimes supported by contributions from the Praise and Worship team. Indeed, the music will prepare the way for the sermon. The sounds of the music are critical in setting the scene and creating an atmosphere. The music operates as a signifier to both the church and to the prosperity theology. Members of the Praise and Worship team are the carriers of that message. Therefore, exploring how members of the team understand their role as producers of Praise and Worship in the team provides important insights as to how a hard and soft prosperity are operationalised.

Soft Prosperity as evidenced by members of the Praise and Worship team

My interviewees were all members of the Praise and Worship team and various choirs in the church. The Praise and Worship team consist of four different groups of singers who lead the congregation in worship for the two Sunday morning services, and a variety of musicians who make up a band of keyboards, drums and bass guitar. The singers consist of 4 teams of 4 or 5 backing singers and one key worship leader. Being a member of the Praise and Worship is a prestigious and highly visible role. It is also a big commitment, and members are encouraged to work hard. They have to be available for their slots once per month, which could require a start as early as 08.00 and not finish until after 13.00. This, in addition to weekly rehearsals, mid-week meetings, as well as special occasions like Christmas, Easter, conventions and conferences.

Professional Backgrounds

There are few detailed scientific studies on the socio-economic background and education background of prosperity believers in the UK. However, the findings from my field work coheres with Hunt and Lightly's (2001) description of West African churches where he identifies the congregation as middle class and affluent with 60% possessing degrees and professional qualifications. This contradicts previous findings in the US indicating that people with a high socio-economic status are less likely to embrace a prosperity gospel (Schieman and Hyun Jung 2012). Although, the scope of my fieldwork did not allow me to assess where church members of a high socio-economic background registered on the barometer of hard or soft prosperity, it was clear from my time spent in the church that educational qualifications were highly esteemed and featured in the panoply of soft prosperity. Frequent references were made in sermons to education as a positive value to be pursued, and people with higher degrees were greatly respected.⁶⁶ I was aware of many adults in the church who were working full-time while pursuing part-time study. This was in contrast to my experience of Caribbean churches in the 70s and 80s, where despite many programmes of supplementary schools and the church's role in addressing so-called Black underachievement, (Channer 1995, (Byfield 2010), a university education was seen by some as a threat to the faith of the young believer.⁶⁷ In this context, there appeared to be little concern with possible secularizing impact on a believer's faith. Indeed, this type of self-advancement was part of one's spiritual duty. Acquiring educational qualifications was viewed as a means of increasing one's earning power and social status in the community and therefore an integral part of the package of soft prosperity.

⁶⁶ During the course of my fieldwork, I was invited by the minister to sit on a Think Tank to assist the leadership in devising strategies for growth. The group consisted of medical doctors, people with PhDs, lawyers, and high-ranking professionals in the public and private sector. Although this group were hand-picked for their expertise in particular fields and was not necessarily a true representation of the church as a whole, it nonetheless gives an indication of the socio-economic background of some of the members.

⁶⁷ Beckford (2014) recommends that the minimum educational requirement for Pentecostal ministry should be a Bachelor's degree or equivalent and decries the practice of some Black Pentecostal ministers of buying doctorates from unrecognized US institutions.

My six interview participants from NWC came from a range of professional backgrounds. The youngest at the time of interview was completing an HND in Business Accountancy. Older members included a paediatric nurse, a housing consultant, a restaurant manager and a professional musician. The only person unemployed at the time of interview had just completed his undergraduate degree and has since started a job working in a publishing company. They all had in common, the fact that they were professionals with degrees and or professional qualifications and as such provided a good sample of the church's population.

Empowerment

"The church I see is an empowering centre, where ordinary people are challenged, equipped, enabled and released to live extraordinary lives. It's a church where everyone is encouraged to discover their purpose in life, develop their gifts, talents and abilities and fulfil their ministry."

Pastor Tayo The Church I See (<http://www.newwine.co.uk/church/the-church-i-see>).

The above extract from Pastor Tayo's commentary on the idealised church referred to in Chapter Four highlights the opportunities for self-empowerment.

All of the people interviewed were self-taught musicians and singers. One of the main song leaders described how he always loved to sing but wasn't allowed to do so at his previous church. When he came to NWC, he was actively encouraged to get involved. Boakye, in a similar manner, cited how one of the leaders noted his interest in music and encouraged him to develop this further within the church environment.

"He saw me in a service and was like, 'You look like a musician'...He was asking me these questions and asking, what do I play, what kind of music do I enjoy and yeah, I went on to say I play keyboards or I try to play keyboards, and he was like, well would you like to audition....to go further and go into ministry?" (Interview: Boakye 2014).

This propensity to self-help can be used to encourage congregational members to engage in church activity. A mega church is a huge operation and can only function effectively to carry out all of its functions if large numbers of people are prepared to volunteer their time freely. In a previous chapter, I outlined the complex arrangement that the church have in regard to teams and workers, totalling over 200 people. A mega church with an emphasis on prosperity gospel is an empowering environment with the potential for many levels of involvement. Particular roles can offer the believer a unique and specialized set of circumstances to identify an interest and develop themselves. Individuals are empowered to go outside of their comfort zones and engage in activity that will propel their self-advancement and support the church's activities.

Self-Description and Aspiration

I am unstoppable

I am invincible

I am strong

I am stable

I am fruitful

I am prosperous

I am healthy

I am wise

The above excerpt is another one of the chanted confessions referred to in Chapter Four from the 2015 confession entitled 'My Year to Excel'. This quote demonstrates how individuals are encouraged to improve their lives. The manner in which some of the respondents described themselves gives insight to their aspiration and ambition. In addition to their day jobs, all respondents also had external business interests. Eferakorho described himself as a businessman and an entrepreneur, stating that he was a:

“consultant in a couple of streams, not just a consultant in terms of business, but a consultant in terms of ministry” (Interview: Eferakorho 2013).

Eferakorho viewed himself not just as a person who engaged in his 9 – 5 job, giving advice on employment and welfare. He saw himself as having a significant role to play in advising other churches in running choirs, engaging in worship and singing in church. By using the word ‘consultant’ it suggests that he perceived this ‘ministry’ as both having financial, spiritual and intellectual rewards. He did not see any contradictions between these areas. Speaking of his ambition to complete a PhD in the future, he was delighted when the Music Minister asked him to give me an interview for this research as he felt that this was confirmation from God that he also needed to pursue the same route. He saw himself as having something significant to add to the both the church and intellectual community.

A similar presentation of self was echoed by another member of the Praise and Worship team who recounted that although he had been christened Nicholas at birth, he had chosen to rename himself ‘Orakle’ Obarotimi because he felt that he had something significant to add to the lives of young people.

“I feel sort of like I’m a vessel, so I always have something to say...I can always feedback on things. I also see myself as a natural youth worker.” (Interview: Obarotimi 2014)

He too, spoke of his entrepreneurial ambition and business development where alongside his job, he ran a hosting and events company. Obarotimi was a hard worker. He was part of the Praise and Worship team as a singer and musician. He worked in the multimedia team, operated the sound desk, as well as helping out in the youth department.

These entrepreneurial and aspirational ambitions are signs of soft prosperity nurtured and promulgated through sermons, activities and special events. Congregation members are encouraged to avail themselves of the training opportunities offered by the church and

attend the regular financial empowerment workshops, business networking and career orientated sessions. Congregation members are exhorted to be the best that they can be, and this 'best' is often viewed in financial and career terms. Themes such as Enlargement, Dominion, Moving Forward, Excel and sermon titles such as 'You 'Laying the Foundations for Exceedingly Abundant Lives' 4th January '15; Born to Rule and articles in the NWC Chronicle 'You can Prosper in Recession' (6th March 2011) 'Challenge the Status Quo' 13th October '13 illustrate and support this view that soft prosperity is a core theme.

A constant motif running through the discourse emphasizes hard work and application in appropriating a pathway to success. This is ensconced in a spirituality and theology which sees no contradiction between mammon and God, reminiscent of Weber's Protestant work ethic where worldly success is something to be pursued and is seen as a sign of divine favour.

So far, I have discussed the notion of hard and soft prosperity and how it is operationalized within the context of the church. I have argued that the Praise and Worship team provide a critical site to investigate how the pursuit of prosperity is mediated through ambition and aspiration. It is important to understand this broader context in order to appreciate my argument in regard to the specific musical context. Green (1988) purports that in order to assess and interrogate musical meaning, we need to understand the social context within which the music is heard. I would extend this by adding that when analysing religious meaning, an analysis of the musical product provides insights not available elsewhere. In the next section I will describe some of the changes that have taken place in the management of the music.

Professionalism of the Music

It was clear during the course of the interviews that a shift has occurred in how the music ministry was organized and managed over the last six years. Members of the Praise and Worship team, some of whom had been part of the ministry for around seventeen years talked about the significant changes that had taken place. Eferakorho talked about the state of the music ministry when the church first started. He described how they used to meet in a local community hall on Sundays with about 20 people, and then at the local leisure centre on Friday nights. Like many small churches, music was a key element of their ritual practice. At the time, the team lacked the professional veneer that it had acquired in the recent years. Speaking of the choir, Reid described how things were in the old days:

".... people that were leading before, were just church members. I mean, to be honest, they couldn't -- some of them couldn't even teach parts. I mean, they couldn't sing parts let alone teach" (Interview: Reid 2013).

Reid spoke nostalgically about the changes. She described how she would bring her 6-year-old son to rehearsals and he would play with friends while they were rehearsing.

"...it was less disciplined in the old choir, but it was more family. It felt more family, there was a lot more older people and youth. We weren't as great, you know, vocally it wasn't as good, but it was family...that's why I stayed as long as I did" (Interview: Reid: 2013).

The situation that Reid describes is one that I recognize from my youth attending many BMCs:

"...everyone always wanted to help out. If you were exhausted, there was always someone there in the congregation that would say I'll go up and sing." (Interview: Reid October 2013)

The primary focus in these situations was not about delivering a highly polished professional product, but about contributing whatever you could to fill in the gaps, to support the smooth running of a service if a musician or singer was absent.

After the move to the Woolwich Coronet, renamed Gateway House, the leadership of the

church employed a full-time Minister of Music. A paid full-time musician in a BMC is unusual within the UK. In the US where there is a successful gospel and Christian music industry, it is the norm to pay church musicians. However, in the UK context, it is generally only mega churches that can afford to do this. The decision to resource such a post gives an indication of the importance and significance given to the role of music in this environment. This is an important consideration if broadcasting services globally, as frequently happens in NWC. The timing of the move was also significant in that it occurred after the move to the much larger space. The church had aspirations of being a mega-church, hence the move to a Grade 2 listed building in the centre of Woolwich with seating for over 1,000, and the capacity to have 2 or more services on Sundays.

Lawrence Johnson was appointed Minister of Music in 2009. Johnson, a veteran of the UK gospel music industry (referred to in Chapter One) grew up in a Caribbean BMC church and he was one of the founder members of the award-winning choir LCGC⁶⁸. He experienced moderate, commercial success in the mainstream popular music industry in the 1990s when he led a group called NuColours, signed to Polydor Records. Their tracks *Special Kind of Lover* and *'Desire'* reached the 40s in the UK charts (Smith 2009). Johnson was one of a number of Black church musicians who performed with secular artists in the 1990s.

Since that time Johnson has worked successfully as a session artist with a number of top industry musicians including Westlife and Susan Boyle. Johnson came to NWC with extensive music industry experience. He recounted that during his interview, he was told that the church had previously been known for its preaching, but now the leadership wanted to be known for their music and he would be required to bring the X Factor to NWC (Interview: Johnson 2012).

⁶⁸ See footnote 15.

The church identified that their sound and musical output was an important element in their means of presentation. However, not just any sound; the sound needed to be modern, exciting and carry with it facets of glamour and desirability to embody the elements of a Pentecostal identity as pointed out in Chapter Six.

Members of the Praise and Worship team reflected how Johnson had changed the organisation of the music. All agreed that he had brought a more professional approach and was able to take the choir to a higher performance level. However, this professionalism had its casualties and the 'bringing of the X Factor' in the spirit of the TV talent show involved re-auditioning all members and weeding out those members deemed 'not up to scratch'. (Interview: Johnson 2012) It appeared that many of these were the older people. Eferakorho stated paradoxically:

'I know that some of the older people in churches they were trained kind of musically, but the genres were very, very, very, very limited.' (Interview: Eferakorho 2013)

The older people, it appeared did not fit the discourse of this professionalism. Reid lamented:

" I think it's a lot more restrictive now, you can't do as much." (Interview: Reid 2013)

Changing the discourse

Johnson outlined his priorities for the post. He stated that he had to start from scratch and auditioned everyone, in order to get rid of all the 'dead weight'. Participants, although passionate about their ministry, who did not meet the required standard were told to return in six months after a period of tuition. I was not able to ascertain during the interview how many had returned. Given the earlier comments about losing the older members, and from observation, it was clear that the worship teams in the church were occupied by young people mainly under thirty. His ambition for the church was that their music would be of 'industry standard', and he wanted to '*create a NWC sound*' with a

view to making an album in the near future. Johnson stated that he aimed to give his 'best singers' a high profile experience by ensuring that they went into the studio with him and gained prestigious performance opportunities.

Part of the new professionalism and vibrancy was also about the visual discourse, and visual presentation of the self.

Role of the Image

An essential part was also communicated via the image. Song leaders were highly visible. People leading worship were at the front of the auditorium, on a raised stage in full view of the congregation. The young team are always dressed in highly fashionable clothes, and always colour coordinated. I noted that during the period of the research, I did not observe any of the Praise and Worship team in African attire. Reid who was in charge of uniforms for both the choirs and Praise and Worship teams, outlined that the visual appearance of the people on stage was of critical importance. She signalled to me that she had strict rules even though she met resistance from some female members. Messy dress which she described as tracksuits, un-ironed clothes and flat shoes were not tolerated. She rationalized, that if you were going to see the queen, 'you would dress up', so why not when you were leading worship in church. High heels, she stated, completed an outfit, you needed to dress from 'top to bottom' and she mandated that all female song leaders had to wear heels. Reid made a direct link with the sound and the image, and possible sexual distractions:

"and no matter how good you sing, if you look messy or your skirt's up here and everything's showing, no-one can hear what you're singing" (Interview: Reid 2013)

Reid linked the notion of excellence with clothing and appearance:

"...clothing, appearances, very important because if we're going to sing excellently, why not look excellent. I think it's very important -- most people don't think -- they go, it's just clothes and I go, it's so not. It's so not." (Interview: Reid 2013)

It was clear from these responses that the visual and sonic appearance of the team was of prime importance. The consideration of the 'look' of the team was a key element in communicating meaning, and also draws attention to the importance of the work of a multimodal analysis.

An International Worship Centre

The church I see is an international worship centre, consisting of people from every race, tongue, tribe and nation. Where racism and every form of ungodly discrimination is forever banished. It's a church where people are free to be themselves knowing that their ultimate identity comes from their personal relationship with God, through His Son, Jesus Christ. **Pastor Tayo, The Church I See** <http://www.newwine.co.uk/church/the-church-i-see>

In the extract above, Pastor Tayo identifies the idealised church as being an international worship centre. Findings from the interviews indicated that a change had taken place in the musical discourse with the arrival of Johnson as Music Minister to the church in order to accommodate this. Not only was there a shift in a greater emphasis on young people, notions of professionalism in sound and dress, there was also a shift in regard to the genre, style and type of song that was being sung:

"The first thing is the culture change, the culture shift. The culture shift in music from African base worship to the Hosanna music which felt very British and Anglo-Saxon in a way and then there was a switch from that to a balance of American style worship and Hillsong type worship"
(Interview: Obarotimi August 2014).

The Hosanna music that Obarotimi refers to here is early Praise and Worship music. A graduation is suggested in his analysis with African music at the base, followed by Hosanna, African American and then Hillsong at the top. He explained that it wasn't simply that African songs were sung, but that there was something about the very mode of interaction which gave a different sound and different feel. In what some may regard as an essentialist approach, he makes a direct correlation between the origins and sounds of

music.

“...the pronunciations were very, very African. The style of music, the drums, the keyboardist, so everything had that feel of this is where we’re from, this is how we play music...” (Interview: Obarotimi 2014).

Obarotimi here was not just placing himself in a geographic context. He identified a sound, a place and an aesthetic that was African, for which he assumed an ownership.

All the interviewees identified that a directive had been issued from the leadership telling musicians, singers and worship leaders that they needed to move away from the African sound and from the African songs.

‘...it was like no, no, no, Nigerian music’ (Interview: Reid 2013).

“Especially...I remember Pastor Tayo actually getting on stage and saying, ‘We are not a Nigerian church. Stop speaking vernacular.’ And I was like, what!” (Interview: Obarotimi August 2014)

“...it was his opinion... he kinda enforced that we were not a Nigerian church or West African church. It’s an international church” (Interview: Eferakorho 2013)

The phrase ‘we are not a Nigerian church’ was emphatically repeated several times in the interviews, and is one that I have already referred to. The members of the team were keen to emphasise that this was not how they wished to be observed. They preferred to view themselves as ‘international’ as this was seen as a more positive identification. It was rationalized as follows:

“...back in the early days, he was like, this is not an African church. So, it was never a case where people could bring all that stuff because there were other people here, there were West Indian people, there’s English people, I don’t want anyone feeling isolated. He even banned things like talking in your language in the hall because it’s.... no, it’s rude. So, I think he did the same with the singing. It wasn’t that we can’t sing African stuff, but it was like, this is not just an African church, so we need to make sure that everyone is catered for really.” (Interview: Reid 2013)

Johnson justified this position,

“I know why the reason is and I understand, Pastor T, specifically doesn’t want it to be known as an African church – he wants it to be known as an international church – a place where people feel comfortable, because we have a lot of West

Indians here, we have some English here, we have South Africans here, different mixtures of different churches.”
(Interview: Johnson 2011)

“Although this church is a very multicultural church, you know, there's loads of Africans, there's some...even some English born that may not be familiar with African music or Caribbean music’
(Interview: Boakye 2014)

A focus on internationalism is a common theme amongst neo-Pentecostal churches, situating them in a global arena. This is often typified by the use of large numbers of flags. Some churches are of the belief that if they adopt a more ‘international’ approach, they will have greater success in attracting people from the local community, giving an opportunity to engage with reverse mission.

Obarotimi recounted that although there was some resistance initially from church members, they eventually came to adopt the view that it was a good idea. Many felt that the repertoire was much more ‘diverse’ and, indeed, inclusive. They viewed the current repertoire as ‘universal’. This idea chimes with Pastor Tayo’s view of an international worship centre. Universality in this vein appeared to represent the style of music. Obarotimi linked the universal approach with a move in the leadership to have more international speakers. He cited Australian, South African and Indian, but pointed out that the focus shouldn’t be on ethnicity, suggesting a discomfort with a focus on race. His view was that we should concentrate on ‘being the best’.

“So I think musically, it’s universal. Lyrically it can be changed to suit any culture”
(Interview: Obarotimi 2014).

Obarotimi saw the current repertoire which as described in my last chapter consisted mainly of Hillsong and North America repertoire, as being universal. According to him, a more inclusive approach could be adopted by singing songs in a wider variety of languages such as Polish, Afrikaans and French. The choice of language here is odd as

these languages do not represent large populations within the church.

Comfort as a Perennial Leitmotif

As well as the word ‘international’, the word *comfort* was one used repeatedly in the rationalization with opposing explanations. Obarotimi argued that it was lazy for the team simply to sing songs that they were *comfortable* with. Others argued that it was important that outsiders attending the church should feel *comfortable* with the material that they heard. Johnson brought a more nuanced approach suggesting that other Black ethnicities such as ‘West Indian’ and ‘South African’ might be ‘*uncomfortable*’ with a prominence of Nigerian songs, indicating some of the complexities around ethnicities inherent in this discussion. Sometimes the word ‘normal’ was also used in this context. The suggestion here was that Nigerian songs, or the African intonation as described by Obarotimi was somehow ‘*uncomfortable*’, or abnormal perhaps even alienating for outsiders.

This notion of comfort coheres with my musical analysis in the previous chapter where I identified the prominence in the use of melodies that were short, familiar and engendering a feeling of pleasure in the execution. The same could be said in the use of the major mode, which is often associated with feelings of positivity and happiness (and as noted these correlations are not natural or inherent but have developed over a period of time by long association. Machin 2010). This was further confirmed in the content analysis of the lyrics which revealed an avoidance of political, social and environmental concerns and a refraining from engaging in negative emotions such as fear, disappointment or sadness.

Recorded Sector

The normative aspect also related to the recorded sector. Dixon, like Boakye, related to the marketplace. She stated that every year, there were 2 or 3 hits in churches, and

everyone wanted to be seen to be singing the hit songs. In a similar way to the mainstream secular industry, the mass market held dominance in music output of a church.

The role of the worship leader is extremely significant within BMCs. It is the song leader who decides which songs are going to be sung, and in what order. The selected songs set the mood and the tone for the worship. The two most significant elements of a BMC service are the preaching and the worship. Although worship is broader than the musical discourse, it is often used to mean the singing at the start of the service as described in my last chapter. I was interested to find out how song leaders chose their songs. Johnson felt that the church was quite diverse, because song leaders had different preferences, and this was demonstrated on a weekly basis. The songs leaders that I interviewed, while identifying that in choosing songs, they considered the melodic, lyrical and thematic elements, the link with songs from the recorded sector was a prominent theme. Obarotimi stated that songs from the recorded sector were more inclusive:

“And then when you come to church to hear them actually singing one of the songs on a CD that you feel ministered to you, that song will automatically stimulate an emotion” (Interview: Obarotimi 2014).

He further stated that:

“So, once I get in my heart where God wants me to go, I go on YouTube to find other songs that I know will correlate in that direction” (Interview: Obarotimi 2014).

Journalist Dixon also stated that song leaders needed to:

“Be aware of relatively what’s popular, what’s coming to the floor because there are certain songs that become hits in churches” (Interview: Dixon 2014).

Gwazai was also concerned with popular songs, but linked this to divine inspiration:

“...what’s popular, I listen to a lot of other churches, and what they sing, like overseas or like leading gospel artists, or Christian artists, Israel Houghton, for example, and what type of songs he’s singing, and see if they will fit into the ethos of our church, or if I can bring them over and sing them. Mostly, it’s divine inspiration, I would like to think, but while I’m about that, but it’s not that I spend 5 days praying, no, it’s more ahm...I will pray about it, when it feels right, I’ll just

have a peace about it, and yeah, this song, I'm sure that we should really do this, and then we go ahead and do that. I don't know." (Gwazai: Interview 2012)

The foregoing narrative appears to suggest that a normative, inclusive non-Nigerian repertoire indicates a standard for a prosperity church which identifies as universal, modern and professional. Bowler & Wen Reagen's (2014) link between a professionally executed style of music and a prosperity gospel. Their research found that the music in prosperity churches project an image that is professional, young and vibrant chiming with notions of wealth, health and prosperity.

However, my research found evidence that such a direct causal link was too simplistic. The church was also trying to negotiate the previously banned Nigerian music. Although singing songs from the recorded sector was the dominant discourse within the church, Eferakorho recounted that other music was sung outside of the main Sunday service, which is arguably the showpiece, and the occasions where members of the local community such as Alfie were likely to visit. During the phase of my field work, as outlined in a previous chapter, I had also witnessed this at baptisms, and smaller mid-week services. He recounts:

"That was kind of allowed, we could sing it in English, African or African Caribbean kind of songs. So we would do songs, for example, songs like (Sings) 'Goodbye world I'll stay no longer with you', and things like that. Or we could do songs like (Sings) 'Today oh, Yeah I will lift up my eyes and sing'. As time went on there was a little bit of understanding. (Interview: Eferakorho 2013)

He goes onto to describe what happens when a Nigerian song is sung in the church.

"She did that song and once she got to the Yoruba bit, oh my gosh, I felt the rapture was about to take place, and God.... And I said to myself do you know what... people need ... maybe there is something that we are missing here ... and it made me realize that ... people gravitate to what they are indigenously used to. I found any time there is either an African or Caribbean kind of like undertone to a worship song in church the whole place erupts." (Interview: Eferakorho November 2013)

He is describing here, the excitement and ecstasy that is demonstrated in the congregation when a Nigerian song is sung in the main service. This confirmed what I had observed during the course of my field work. He cites the rapture as a means of

comparison: this is an occasion, signalling the end of time, when some evangelical Christians believe that Jesus will remove all the believers from the earth, leaving destruction and chaos behind. (Matthew 24.40) This is referenced as a symbol of ecstasy and wonderment. He reflects on the fact that something different is added to the worship when people are allowed to worship in a fashion that they are used to. I noted that on these occasions, congregation members would engage in African dance, and start waving hands and sometimes handkerchiefs in the air, appearing to be freer in their bodily expression. There seemed to be a more exuberant engagement when these songs were sung. Johnson also observed that there was a 'certain enthusiasm' when these songs were sung. Eferakorho concluded that we may be limiting God if people were not permitted to worship in 'their own tongue.'

However, it isn't simply a case of singing Nigerian songs or non-Nigerian songs, as I observed in the previous chapter; the manner in which the songs were sang also had a different flavour to them.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have established NWC as a church where prosperity gospel predominates in a number of different facets. Using Bowler's notion of a 'hard' and 'soft' prosperity, I have argued that these two positions are not fixed and immovable entities, but rather are poles along which a congregation may navigate. Using the Praise and Worship team as a model where hard and soft prosperity are evidenced, I tell the story of how changes in the musical discourse of the church impact on the type and style of repertoire. Scholars contend that the growth of Pentecostal is due to its ability to reproduce itself in local contexts. I would argue that at NWC, the musical discourse enables a style of presentation, that is comfortable, promotes pleasure, and is in keeping with key messages in a wealth and health gospel. This act of uncritically privileging and

deliberate silencing certain types of sounds within a religious context leads to a demonisation of voices, reminiscent of a type of cultural enslavement. However, the research also found signs of resistance, and spaces where West African material was celebrated.

In the next chapter, using data collected from three other churches in Woolwich, I will explore the esthetic parameter of these churches to assess whether the findings from NWC are replicated elsewhere.

CHAPTER EIGHT

THE ESTHESIC IN CHRISMA, ANCHOR AND CHRIST FAITH TABERNACLE

As I have argued in previous chapters, vibrant singing, up-tempo beats and a whole performance panoply are deeply meaningful semiotic associations of the musical discourse conferred on Pentecostal Praise and Worship in all of its diverse formations. While Praise and Worship and music are not synonymous, the music in Pentecostal church services is critical to the generating and embedding of worship activities Albrecht (1999). It is argued that this embodiment has contributed to the rapid growth and success of Pentecostalism(s) on all sides of the ethnic divide (Alexander 2009, Evans 2006). Furthermore, as argued in a Chapter Two, there is an uncritical acceptance that African diasporic Christian communities exhibit these characteristics and in much of the literature on the formation of UK BMCs, this diasporic connection is invoked, and similar claims are made (Calley 1965, Pryce 1979, Beckford 1998, MacRobert 1989, Edwards 1992). However, in the literature there is little systematic analysis to support these claims. So far, I have undertaken a multimodal analysis of the Praise and Worship at NWC in order to assess its relationship to a neo-Pentecostal identity.

In this chapter I will document and analyse the findings from visiting three BMCs in Woolwich during the period of 2014 – 2016. The churches visited are three of the biggest and most influential, apart from NWC, in the borough. Their influence stemming from the

size of their denomination and the global reach of the church, (this is outlined below). The data collection methods that were used in this chapter were the same as those employed in the rest of the dissertation. That is participant observation, semi-structured interviews and multimodal analysis. I attended and participated in the services in order to hear the types of songs that were sung and to observe the interaction with the music in order to understand the role that music played in the churches as a means of analysing similarities and differences with NWC. That data is analysed in dialogue with stakeholders from the Christian music industry and the leaders of the churches. This input was important in providing a context and a background to an area where there is little written documentation. The analysis of the songs using the CCLI database and the semi-structured interview data will add to the esthetic and poietic analysis.

I spend some time describing the physical environment of the churches' premises and briefly outline the sermon that was preached when I visited. As outlined previously, sounds are heard in a context and we bring meaning-making processes to that context. Secondly, the church's semiotic internal and external signs provide additional modes for analysis when combined with the musical discourse. It is my contention that an analysis of the sights and sounds of Pentecostalism provide a unique insight into this diverse and distinct mode of belief. However, the main focus was a collection of the song repertoire. The most significant element to emerge from the data collection exercise at NWC was the reliance on music from the global Christian music sector and the lack of material which reflected the predominant ethnicity of the church's attendees. I was keen to explore whether this was replicated elsewhere. So, although the repertoire outlined in this chapter was collected on individual visits, the overall mix of the material was confirmed on subsequent follow-up visits. My experience of attending churches for many years attests to the fact that they rarely deviate from a prescribed repertoire unless there is a change in leadership or policy. Therefore, the approach taken for these mini case studies will give a

good indication of regular practice.

Denominational Contexts

The three churches, based in Woolwich, were Anchor, Chrisma and CFT. They cohere with Sturge's (2005) definition of a BMC insofar as more than 50% of the congregations are people from an African or Caribbean heritage. In fact, on the days of my visits, more than 95% of the people in attendance were Black African or Caribbean. These churches also represent the diversity found in BMCs and all signify a different stage in the development of the Black Church Movement in the UK.

Chrisma is part of the NTCG, the oldest denomination in my sample and characterises Adedibu's⁶⁹ (2012) third stream of Black Pentecostalism in the UK. NTCG emerged from the Holiness tradition in America and is one of oldest Black Pentecostal denominations in the UK and comprises of people mainly from the Caribbean, namely Jamaica (Interview: Pastor Claion 2016). The denomination started on 20th September 1953, has over 130 congregations in England and Wales and 300 accredited ministers (ntcg.org.uk/about), and a world-wide membership of over 7 million in nearly 189 countries world-wide (churchofgod.org). The current vision has a focus on growth in a number of areas: numerical, organizational development and social responsibility.

Anchor, part of the RCCG, is referred to in Chapter Two.

CFT is the church opposite to NWC referred to in Chapter Five. Like NWC this church is not part of an established denomination in the UK, insofar as they do not have many branches in the UK. They do, however, have over 1,500 churches or affiliate branches

⁶⁹ Adedibu (2012) detailed historical account helpfully recognizes the longevity of BMCs in the UK, and confirms that the first church was established in 1906

across the globe in countries as diverse as India, Ireland and Jamaica of which Apostle Williams is the presiding bishop (Interview: Apostle Williams 2016).

They started from humble beginnings by meeting in the home of Apostle and Mrs P. Oma Williams in Deptford in 1989. Formally constituted in 1990, they moved to a community centre and then bought several buildings in Deptford and Lewisham, before eventually buying the large former cinema in Woolwich. The church currently has an international headquarters in New Cross but hold most of their services in the Cathedral building in Woolwich. The congregation of the church is mixed, but they attract people mainly from Nigeria (Interview: Apostle Williams, 2016).

Chrisma – Location and History

Location and description of building

Chrisma is housed in a former synagogue in a residential area of Woolwich quite close to the town centre nestled amongst flats, shops, restaurants and other local amenities. The area known locally as 'Somali town' due to its proximity to Somalian restaurants and shops, is also home to a large sprawling council estate with large numbers of Somalian residents. The Shining Stars Nursery occupies the same building as the church and there is a small car park providing space for about 5 cars adjacent to the building. The name of the denomination is positioned to the top of the building and another sign to the side displays the name of the church in blue lower-case lettering. The denomination's name is reiterated and details of times of the services are also displayed.

Description of Auditorium

The small auditorium, seating about 150 people is located on two levels, with the upper level comprising the stage. The décor is simple, but tasteful. Blue and white walls contrast

with a simple wooden cross positioned to the back wall and the wooden pulpit with the NTCG logo emblazoned on the front. This is all complemented by comfortable blue chairs and blue carpet. Artificial flowers are used to decorate the church.

Large black speakers are situated around the church, some on the floor, and two attached to the wall. Three monitors are on the stage, where the song leaders are also located. The band positioned on the lower level with the congregation are surrounded by six speakers and a small mixing desk. The numbers of black boxes are perhaps a testament to the importance of music in this environment. A video camera is located in a corner but isn't in use on the Sunday that I attended.

Demographic

Pastor Claion (Interview: 2016) reported that there were between 150 – 170 adults and children in regular attendance at the church. The congregation were mainly Black, with the majority of members coming from the Caribbean with Jamaica as the prominent island⁷⁰. Pastor Claion described the church as a BMC stating:

“We are a Black Pentecostal church strongly influenced by the Caribbean culture, very much open to welcoming other cultures but also insistent on preserving who we are culturally” (Interview: Pastor Claion 2016).

On the day that I attended, the congregation consisted of mainly senior females, many wearing hats denoting the church's roots in the Holiness tradition. All members were dressed in western dress, with many young women wearing jewellery, make-up, trousers and very fashionable garments. This is in contrast to the Holiness tradition of many years ago, where such adornment would be viewed as sinful and therefore inappropriate for attending church. The few males that I observed were either quite young or elderly. There

⁷⁰ The Church of God, Cleveland, Tennessee from which NTCG evolved had strong roots in Jamaica well before the Windrush period. The first church started there in 1917, and by 1920 had tripled its membership Conn (1977: 144-145).

appeared to be a significant gap in the number of young people in their twenties or thirties. During the course of the service, the Sunday School children were invited to the front to be prayed for. It was clear that they had a thriving Sunday School, with large numbers of children. It was very multi-cultural, perhaps indicative of the church's success in attracting children from the local community, but not their parents.

History and Bio of Pastor

The church started in Woolwich in 1967 and was then pastored by Bishop Eldermore Johnson and is now led by Pastor Claion Grandison who has been minister of the church since 2003. He was born in the UK but moved to Jamaica with his parents aged 8. He returned to the UK to take up a secular job in 1990. He entered the ministry in 2000 following participation in a worship seminar where it was suggested to him that God might be leading him in this area. At the time of the research, while pastoring the church he was also studying for a B.A. (Hons) at Spurgeon's College. Given his expertise in worship and his wife leading the worship team he was well placed as an interview participant.

Function of Music

Chrisma's web site highlighted the importance of Praise and Worship to the church. Described as a 'priority' in the life of the church, they claim to have a diverse cultural mix in their approach, which was borne out in the selection of songs which was the most varied of three churches visited including at least one song from each of the categories identified. They further state that it is their desire to have a 'strong and vibrant praise team', who will lead the congregation into 'true worship' <http://www.ntcgchrisma.org/version2/ministry/praise-and-worship.php>.

The website also included a historical overview of Praise and Worship in the Bible and underlined the role that the activity should play corporately and in the personal lives of the believer. Another tab entitled the Power of Praise uses Old Testament scriptures to

emphasis the role of praise in defeating enemies. Praise is defined as dancing, singing, lifting hands and laughter (<http://www.ntcgchrisma.org/version2/ministry/praise-and-worship.php>).

While the Chrisma web site mentioned the inclusion of dance and flag waving, these activities were not in evidence at the time of my attendance. Neither was there the inclusion of poetry or drama. While these art forms may be evident for special occasions, as was the case at NWC, music was clearly the art form that had the dominance as a normative activity.

Anchor – Location and History

Anchor is located in a former Quadrant Housing Trust building close to the town centre, near the spot where fusilier Lee Rigby was brutally murdered in 2013. This two-storey extensive building in Artillery Place adjoins a recruitment agency and Indian Restaurant and has car parking for at least 30 cars. The church opened in 2006 and is one branch of 24 RCCG churches in the borough, and one of ten with a SE18 post code.

Description of Auditorium

The space seated about 200 people, with very low ceilings. The walls were painted in light cream with a contrasting wall in lime green. The red velvet straight backed chairs trimmed with gold coloured beading complement the red carpet. The interior was modern, and uncluttered with a simply designed wooden pulpit, displaying the name of the church and the RCCG logo. Two steps led to a slightly raised platform where the singers were located. The musicians were positioned to the side of the stage alongside the singers on the same level of the congregation. Artificial flowers adorn the stage, and glittering fairy lights were draped around the pulpit.

Four large speakers were attached to the wall, with fold back monitors on the stage. The band comprising of guitar, keyboards and drums were located on the same level as the congregation. The drum kit was positioned behind a Perspex screen. Two large screens were attached to the back of the stage. The service was being filmed, and photographs taken by someone who appeared to be the church's designated photographer.

Demographic

On the Sunday that I attended everyone in the congregation was Black and comprised mixed ages. The leader that I spoke to confirmed that the congregation were predominantly African and Caribbean (Interview: Leader A 2016). Many people were dressed in traditional African costume. At least one third of the congregation were children aged 3 – 16 who left after the worship segment to go to the Sunday School.

History and Bio of Pastor

The church is run by Nigerian pastor, Segun Adenuga who is an accountant by training and has a post graduate diploma in management. (Lifecomfm.ac.uk) He took over in 2006 after the church had been opened for two years.

Function of Music

Anchor had also devoted space on their website to the importance of music. They aim to serve God through music and voices, seeking to

‘usher the congregation into God’s presence and centre their attention on Jesus’(<http://theanchorparish.org.uk/music.html>).

As well as the theological defence of music they also highlight the weekly rehearsals and auditions for people wanting to join the Praise and Worship team. Additionally, they advertise a ‘singspiration’ day that welcomes people from different tribes, cultures,

nations and languages, providing an opportunity to worship in their own traditional and cultural way.

Christ Faith Tabernacle – Location and History

Location and description of building

As discussed in a previous chapter, CFT is housed in a Grade 2 listed building. This was a former cinema and Bingo Hall located opposite NWC on the edge of Woolwich town centre at end of a busy shopping thoroughfare. The location and the description of the building is included in Chapter Five.

Description of auditorium

The interior of the auditorium was spectacular having recently been restored in the style of the original Gothic architectural style featuring all of the characteristic elements including ornate façade, rose windows, pointed spires. The auditorium seating 2,500⁷¹ people was resplendent with ornate carvings. The church worked in conjunction with English Heritage, Local Conservation Team and Cinema Theatre Association. Richmond, the architects, made every effort to source fittings and fixtures that were the same or as similar as possible to the original. Clearly one of their most ambitious and successful projects, a case study of the work is featured on their website, stating that the building is:

‘...a luxurious and yet revered place of worship, and at the same time addressing the needs and facilities of a modern church.’

[\(www.churchdesign.co.uk/work/christ-faith-tabernacle-woolwich/\)](http://www.churchdesign.co.uk/work/christ-faith-tabernacle-woolwich/).

The band, consisting of bass and electric guitar, grand piano and trumpet were located on the stage, surrounded by multiple speakers and fold back monitors. The drums kit was enclosed in a Perspex cage and huge screen almost equal to the length of the stage was

⁷¹ At the time of interview Apostle Williams stated that there were currently extending the capacity of the auditorium to accommodate 4,000 people.

located towards the back.

Demographic

Apostle Williams described the church as a BMC pointing out that the majority of the congregation were Nigerians, but also included people from the Cameroon, South Africa, Eritrea, Somalia, Congo, Ivory Coast, Australia, America and 'a couple of whites' (Interview: Apostle Williams 2016). Within the context of the conversation, I assumed that the white people who attended were from the UK. There were large numbers of young people ranging from toddlers to young professionals in their early 30s. There were many husbands and wives adorned in matching outfits of African cloth, no doubt representing their homelands.

History and Bio of Pastor

Apostle Alfred Williams, the founder and pastor of the church, was born in Nigeria and came to England to complete his undergraduate education in Land Surveying and Mapping Sciences at North East London Polytechnic in 1983. He told me that in the second year of his course he received a call into ministry which he resisted because like Pastor Tayo, he loved his profession and was reluctant to change direction. He also had a degree in Broadcasting, an LLB (Bachelor of Laws) and at the time of interview was studying for an LLM (Master of Laws) in International Business and Corporate Governance.

Function of music

Music was clearly a significant element in the life of the church. A paragraph is given to worship in their publicity material. This section emphasizes the importance of Praise and Worship in the services. The reader is beckoned to

‘Come and be enthralled by our gifted musicians and enraptured by the delightful sound of our dynamic...’ (CFT publicity leaflet).

It goes on to list the names of their various choirs, which include the main choir, the youth choir and the children’s choir. Apostle Williams told me that he was very proud of their various choirs and they were often invited to sing at corporate events for large companies such as Barclays, HSBC, KPMG and Shell.

Theological Emphasis

In the previous chapter, I discussed NWC’s adherence to the theological doctrine described as ‘prosperity gospel’. I argued that signs of this could be identified in a number of facets of the church’s operations and was reinforced in the musical discourse. I was interested to see in this phase of the research whether similar connections could be made.

Pastor Claion from Chrisma was clear about his stance on prosperity gospel. He outlined to me that while he believed that God had the power to bless people financially, he did not subscribe to the notion of God ‘magically’ providing huge sums of money to individuals if they engaged in sowing a seed. This position was reiterated in the sermon that I heard delivered by a middle-aged female who used Matthew 6 25-34 and preached about the place of worry in the believer’s life. It was an encouraging and upbeat sermon where the congregation were encouraged not to worry about the everyday problems of life such as finances, sickness, children etc. She stated that there may be times when we are unable to pay the bills, and we didn’t always know how to make ends meet. She pointed to her own experiences of sometimes not having sufficient money to buy lunch and reflected on the hardships that she had experienced as a child in Jamaica, identifying that despite the difficulties, she had learnt the importance of placing one’s trust in God.

Personal stories of members of the congregation were cited and highlighted as evidences of God's provision.

When it was time for the offering, the congregation walked to the front to deposit their gifts, and the Praise and Worship leader opened the session by declaring 'When it is offering time, it is blessing time.' This statement, although a mantra in hard prosperity settings, suggests a perhaps a causal link between the act of giving and the act of receiving. Within this context it appears to accept that blessings can also be non-financial. It was evident that the hard prosperity that was clearly evidenced at NWC was not practised at this church.

The sermon at Anchor was delivered by Pastor Segun. He used the Old Testament passage 2 Kings 7:3 as the text. This story is about 4 lepers who decide to enter the Syrian camp, rather than stay outside the city walls and starve. The Syrians hear what they think is an invasion and flee the camp. Consequently, the lepers have full range of the camp and can eat and drink to their fill. The focus of the sermon is about having a dream. The congregation are told that they cannot make progress until they have a dream. He outlined that dreams require a hunger and desire. The congregation are prompted that if they follow through on desires, they will be ultimately fulfilled. He made a number of references to immigration, housing, education and other social issues; and mention was made of a number of high profile personalities such as Steve Jobs, Michael Jordan etc. There was a good deal of interactivity in the sermon. Congregational members were encouraged to 'turn to your neighbour and say: 'You will not die, you will not bury anyone'. Like Chrisma, there was a strong family atmosphere, and Pastor Segun referred to named individuals in the congregation.

The leader A (Interview 2016) that I spoke to denied that the church had an affiliation with

the prosperity gospel, however, there were strong evidences to the contrary during the time of the offering. The regular tithers were asked to come to the front to deposit their tithe in advance of the rest of the congregation. They were told that their seed would produce a harvest and that ‘giving will provoke prosperity in your life.’

Apostle Williams from CFT was unequivocal about his stance on prosperity

“I teach against what is known as prosperity teaching, because it is wrong teaching. I teach people according to the scripture, how to prosper” (Interview: Apostle Williams 2016).

He stated that the emphasis on money in many churches was contrary to his understanding of what the scriptures said. He believed in a prosperity of the mind and developing the ‘potential of the intellectual’. He went on to explain that he had been involved in mentoring over 1,000 young men in London over a 25-year period. Many had been part of gangs and had now gone on to have successful careers in law, and in the world of finance. He pointed out that many of his congregation members had financial portfolios of over £2 million. So, while, he disapproved vehemently of

“...milking people, raising their hope for nothing only to enrich the purse of one person” (Interview: Apostle Williams 2016),

he did believe that Christians, by virtue of their status as children of God, would prosper financially if they were educated, disciplined and engaged in hard work:

“I teach my people that the one who has knowledge rules the world... If you move in God’s righteousness, you will waste little of your life...” (Interview: Apostle Williams 2016).

While Apostle Williams disavowed a belief in prosperity gospel, there was a notable emphasis on the supernatural in his sermon. Using the text of Galatians 5:20, in a talk entitled ‘Don’t take the Grace of God for Granted’, Apostle Williams began by asking whether it was better to be a witch or a sexually immoral person. He stated that grace is open to witches, wizards, lesbians and gays, but it was also possible to lose the grace of

God. He said that it was necessary to qualify for God's grace. Drawing on his educational background, legal terms were used to explain theological concepts, for example, salvation was described as offer and acceptance. Steve Jobs and Apple were referred to as positive examples of achievement.

This recourse to the supernatural was also evidenced in the 25-year Silver Jubilee brochure which painted a turbulent and challenging journey of his time in ministry in the UK. This included assisting a Baptist congregation in Deptford of 16 white people where he was eventually asked to leave due to the Pentecostal practices of speaking in tongues and praying for healing. He was asked to leave another church due to his refusal to refrain from 'catching witches'. There is also mention of someone who reportedly vomited up a live lizard while being healed of epilepsy.

The sermon was very interactive, and the congregation were asked direct questions to which they responded in a characteristic Pentecostal call and response style. A small offering bag was passed around and there were no references made to prosperity teaching. This was supported by Apostle Williams who stated in the interview that they spent very little time in CFT churches globally speaking about money.

Multimodal Analysis

In the previous chapter, I made connections with the opulence of the building, belief in a prosperity gospel and the adherence to the mainstream Christian popular music repertoire. The Chrisma building was the most modest of the three and the most in need of visible repair. It was clear from my discussion with the pastor, and the sermon that was preached, that although the church had a belief in God intervening supernaturally in human affairs, they acknowledged that believers may also be subject to poverty, sickness

and despair. In this instance, I did not observe a relationship between physical structure of the building and the theology of the church.

The two African Pentecostal churches on the other hand, were both housed in recently refurbished buildings by church architects Richmond, (as was NWC) and although different in scope and size were modern, relatively sophisticated and in the case of CFT displaying magnificent decor. While in the case of Anchor, one could argue that like NWC, the relationship with the adherence to a mainstream repertoire, modern technological infrastructure and an emphasis on self-help are ingredients of a Pentecostalism that is accommodating itself to the modern world. However, in the case of CFT, this connection was less clear. Apostle Williams was categorical in his rejection of prosperity gospel although the internal and external décor of the Cathedral had all the hallmarks of the performance of the mega. His stance on prosperity could be compared to Weber's (1930) work ethic, where hard work and discipline equated to material richness and power for God's children if they made the appropriate sacrifices. The spatial semiotics of the building melded with an emphasis on a theology that emphasized direct spiritual intervention, and registers on the barometer of soft prosperity as discussed in my previous chapter.

Following this background and context to each of the churches, I will detail the musical repertoire in the Sunday service that I attended in the next section.

The same colour coding chart used previously has also been employed again for the same purposes.

Hillsong
CMM
African American
19 th & 20 th Century Hymns
Caribbean/African

Songs sung in Churches

Tables 19 – 21 show the songs that were sung.

Table 19: Songs sung at Chrisma

1. Christ is enough for me – segue into I have decided to follow Jesus. (Hillsong Live 2013) (CCLI Top 100 Songs 1st September)
2. Every praise is to our God _ Hezekiah Walker, accompanied by highly produced video access by Utube, choreographed dancing (UK CCLI February)
3. Standing on the promises by Russell Kelso Carter (1886 co-edited Songs of Perfect Love with John Sweney) <http://www.sharefaith.com/guide/Christian-Music/hymns-the-songs-and-the-stories/standing-on-the-promises-the-song-and-the-story.html>
4. I give myself away – William McDowell on Album As We Worship Live 2009 (CCLI UK February)
5. Lord I thank you – Calypso
6. There is a healer in the house – by Judy Jacobs, Album House of Healing, 1998– while prayer for healing is going on (CCLI UK)
7. Our God is Greater by Chris Tomlin, 2013 (Offering) (CCLI Top 100)

Table 20: Songs sung at Anchor

- 1) Come and take your place
- 2) I praise you
- 3) I worship you for who you are, by Hillsong United, album, 'Mighty to Save, 2010, CCLI UK

- 4) Open the eyes of my heart, Lord, by Paul Balouche, album, WOW Worship Blue, (Praise Chart No. 29), CCLI UK
- 5) Arise, by Don Moen From the Great Album, Thank you Lord, CCLI UK
- 6) We honour you right now (not listed online)
- 7) Lord, I give you my heart, Hillsong Worship, WOW Worship Yellow, Integrity Music, Praise chart No 54), CCLI
- 8) I'm expecting, William McDowell, album Withholding Nothing, CD/DVD Label Entertainment One, CCLI UK
- 9) Standing on the promises 19th Century Hymn by Russell Kelso Carter , 1886, www.sharefaith.com/guide/Christian-Music/ (CCLI, UK)
- 10) We are standing on holy ground, Geron Davis, WOW Worship Orange, 200 CCLI, UK, (Meadow Music Company, 1983)
- 11) Give and it wil come back to you (Offering), Ron Kenoly 1995, Integrity, Hosanna Music
- 12) I love you with the love of the Lord, 1975 Bud John Songs, EMI, CCLI UK

Table 21: Songs sung at CFT

1. The Earth is the Lord's, J. Berg Esenwein, 1894, hymntime.com
2. Holy, Holy, Holy (Album God Can, Alvin Slaughter 1996)
3. Ain't no Rock (Album, On the Inside, Alvin Slaughter, 1987) (CCLI)
4. Holy, Holy God Almighty, it's a privilege to worship you - Sinach
5. I am a new creation, by Dave Bilbrough, 1983, Thank you Music (CCLI)
6. Showers of blessings (Hymn), Music by James McGranahan 1840 – 1901; Lyrics by Daniel Webster Whittle 1840 – 1907 hymnal.net, CCLI

Table 22: Categorisation of Songs by Genre

Genre:	<i>Chrisma</i> (7)	<i>Anchor</i> (12)	<i>CFT</i> (6)	Total 25
Hillsong	1 14%	2 17%	0	3 12%
CMM	2 29%	4 33%	1 17%	7 28%
African American	2 29%	2 17%	2 33%	6 24%
19 th & 20 th Century Hymns	1 14%	1 8%	2 33%	4 16%

Caribbean/African	1 14%	3 25%	1 17%	5 20%
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Table 23: CCLI Database

	<i>Chrisma</i>	<i>Anchor</i>	<i>CFT</i>	
CCLI	5 - 71%	8 – 75%	3– 50%	

CCM/Praise and Worship - Globalised Worship Music

The key findings from the survey (Table 22 & 23) was that all of the churches' repertoire was predominantly CCM with the majority found in the CCLI database. Anchor, where the largest number of songs were sung, appeared to have the greatest adherence to CCLI at 75%, with Chrisma following closely behind at 71%, and CFT having the least adherence at 50%. There are, however, a couple of elements on the database that skew the results slightly. The two hymns at Anchor and at CFT although included on the CCLI chart would not normally be categorized as CCM. And the Alvin Slaughter song, an AA Praise and Worship song, although not included on the CCLI would be categorized as CCM. These anomalies make a slight difference to the percentages but still indicate a reliance from material from the popular Christian mainstream and recorded sector. These findings also cohere with the repertoire at NWC. The music at these BMC churches are representative of a globalized Christian music industry and resonate with Stowe's claim that CCM is the 'default music of worship' (Stowe: 2011: 1).

UK 'Worship Wars'

According to my respondents, this standardisation in repertoire is one that is relatively new in UK Pentecostal BMCs congregational music. It was clear that although the term

'worship wars' (referred to in Chapter Two) was not used, a shift had taken place in their church environments. Dixon (Interview: 2014) was emphatic that Black Pentecostal congregational music had changed over the years. She described how as a child attending Caribbean churches, they sang songs

"infused with some reggae and choruses from the older members used to sing back home" (Interview: Dixon 2014).

Fletcher in a similar manner describing her upbringing in the Church of God in Christ, (COGIC) also confirmed the singing of songs that she called '*old time choruses*' that came from '*the cultural experiences of the people*'. She described the songs as short and very repetitive, with only 20 or 30 words, and they would be:

"repeated as many times until you could feel the spirit" (Interview: Fletcher 2016).

This change also coheres with the findings from Chapter Seven, where many of my respondents pointed out that with the adoption of the Music Minister at NWC, the repertoire had changed from one where African songs were the norm to a modern contemporary sound. All of the songs, apart from the hymn, are characterized by simple melodies, simple lyrics and the use of repetition.

Lee's (Interview: 2016) reflection on past and current struggles within the SDA suggested that in the UK this shift has not just been restricted to Pentecostal setting. He noted the generational element of the struggle with older members decrying the use of the newer Mission Praise with its inclusion of CCM songs, against the older Adventist hymn book.

"...in the last fifteen to twenty years, I've seen the younger generation have been coming through and they are not afraid to subscribe to the contemporary. Their parents even now are very much against it. (They) don't believe in the contemporary thing, they believe that it is from hell, and ask why would we want to be doing something like that" (Interview: Lee 2016).

These findings suggest that a change in emphasis of the type described in the last chapter, where congregations had been singing songs 'in their own idiom' as described in Chapter Two were now keen to embrace contemporary material more reflective of a

global mainstream Christian culture.

UK Seeker Services

Another aspect of the worship wars was the change to the management and delivery of the music. An emphasis on so-called seeker services, striving to ensure great accessibility included not only the shift from traditional to more popular songs but also a move to slick sophisticated, multimedia presentations. The look and sound of the presentation being of critical importance. I was keen to explore the commonalities and differences that the churches had. According to Liesch

‘...the larger the church, the higher the performance standard required. The larger the membership the greater the need for a great ministry of music’ (Liesch 1996: 139).

This was confirmed to some extent in the research. All of the teams demonstrated a professional standard of performance, suggesting that teams and singers were selected, rehearsed and developed as was the case at NWC. Pastor Claion told me that he paid for a keyboard player for their Sunday services in order to ensure that the music was of a professional standard. Apostle Williams on the other hand was emphatic that no musicians within CFT globally were paid, and all of the musicians and singers in the church volunteered their time. However, he confirmed that the church sponsored thirty young people to attend the borough’s music school, as well as employing a team of people to teach music. It was these teachers who made up the band for the Sunday morning services. Moreover, Apostle Williams described a complicated three-tier operation run by a Music pastor with several layers of coordinators, teachers, and participants. This huge resource and financial investment from the church ensured continuity of a high standard of professional music throughout the church.

The research demonstrated that whilst there were some differences in resource and visible levels of expenditure, all of the churches were similar in regard to the style and

level of performance. They all had a worship leader, worship team and a band. The team of singers ranged from the lowest 5 in Chrisma to 20 in CFT. The band in all cases was male and played popular instruments, i.e. keyboard, guitars, bass and drums (at CFT a grand piano was used) and the song teams were mainly female. I also noted that none of the musicians or singers had visible physical disabilities.

Like NWC, all of the churches owned extensive musical equipment, and had sophisticated technological infrastructures. Chrisma was the only church whose singers and musicians were not dressed in colour coordinated outfits. Nonetheless, it was clear that a professional standard was the expectation, and churches needed to do the necessary work to ensure this standard.

Fletcher bemoaned the emphasis on professionalism and the subsequent loss of inclusivity by congregation members. She described how songs in the past used to be 'raised' from the congregation and was critical of the new system where an assigned worship leader would be charged to choose the songs and lead the congregational singing (Interview: Fletcher 2016). The new system mediated through a number of channels imposed a system from above rather than enabling the more inclusive approach of the previous years.

All of the churches used technology to a high degree. Data projectors were used for displaying the notices and other important information, as well as for projecting the song lyrics. Hymn books were not used on any occasion. The use of a screen structures the mode of interaction in a worship. Congregation members are forced to look up. Mouw describes the screen as the greatest liturgical innovation of the past half century (Mouw 2007). In most Pentecostal environments, the use of a data projector is accepted as the norm. Hymn books although in evidence in Chrisma were not used.

The use of screens is evidence of a modern environment. It was also clear that all three congregations used websites, as well as having Twitter, Facebook and other social media networks. Chrisma were also engaged in starting a 'What's App' group for the purposes of prayer. These churches were not afraid to use the tools of the modern age to advance and assist in their spiritual and evangelist activities.

The Style of Worship

The style of Praise and Worship across the three congregations was similar. Worshippers joined the singing with clapping and raised hands, often clapping at the end of songs. The engagement was loud, and there were few moments for silence or reflection. The congregational participation at Chrisma and Anchor were more enthusiastic than at CFT, although a more excitable mode of engagement was observed here at the end of the service when the musicians played an African song. I have not included this song in my tabulation, as it was not introduced as part of the formal service and the lyrics were not projected. It is also my experience of playing in a number of music teams that the ending of a service is when musicians test the boundaries and play music that may be considered outside of the mainstream.

Standardisation was also observed regarding the tempo and flow of movement. All of the services started with up-tempo songs to elicit participation; this led to a more meditative and reflective engagement before the preacher came onto the stage to deliver the sermon. A similar format was observed at NWC. The management, delivery and standardization are a format that has been accessed via media networks. Fletcher related as follows:

"...and that (the worship teams) became the norm. Because that is seen as the right way to do it. You get the songs (CCM) via the availability of CDs...you hear the songs on the radio...and this helped to form in people's mind that this is the

way to do it. It was a format that changed, everybody liked the stylized thing... you've got the singers that come forward and it just became very stylized "(Interview: Fletcher 2016).

Here Fletcher was reflecting on what is seen and accepted as a modern way of doing worship, the findings in this research confirmed that the churches had conformed to this modern format.

Table 24: Caribbean and African

<i>Genre:</i>	<i>Chrisma</i> (7)	<i>Anchor</i> (12)	<i>CFT</i> (6)	Total 25
Caribbean/African	1 14%	3 25%	1 17%	5 20%

However, despite the emphasis on CCM, the findings also demonstrate that all of the churches included some songs that related to the cultural heritage of the church. However, I noted that this position wasn't normative and, in some cases, seemed to raise questions for the leadership. At Chrisma, there was a lively engagement with the calypso song 'Lord I thank you'. This totalled 14%, of the overall selection. The mix of a variety of material was confirmed by Pastor Claion, who described their song selections as a

"blend, mainly contemporary such as Hillsong, but also including a few calypsos, and the occasional hymn" (Interview 2016).

He explained that they tried to avoid songs in the vernacular, 'Jamaican', in an effort not to alienate non-Jamaicans. He explained that this mix was important as a means of including as many people as possible. This position was similar to the one taken at NWC for changing the repertoire from the more 'Nigerian' repertoire to one that was more mainstream in order to attract the indigenous population. However, Pastor Claion went on to expound that,

"there is a stereotype that we do reggae, but I can't remember the last time we sang a reggae song" (Interview 2016).

Pastor Claion recognised the possibility of a connectivity with the cultural heritage of the majority of his congregation, but in practice the church opted for a more acceptable form of cultural production in the usage of calypso. Lee conscious of the meaning-making processes embedded in varying musical forms, noted a similar aversion to reggae from the older members in his own SDA church.

“...reggae as a genre reminds them of where they are coming from...So in their minds they can only associate reggae with something that was prior to them becoming a Christian or going to church. So that’s why they won’t do that” (Interview: Lee 2016).

Rommen (2006) points out the difficulties that Protestant Christians have engaging with reggae due to associations with Rastafarianism. There is here an apparent clash with a religious and cultural identity, which is ameliorated by the NTCG church by adopting a seemingly less offensive musical form. The musical discourse in both cases is one that polices recalcitrant forms and accommodates the popular mainstream.

A greater number of indigenous songs were heard at Anchor, where although they had largest percentage of CCM, also had the highest percentage of West African songs at 25%. These songs were unknown to me and not included in the CCLI database. Three of the songs were associated with a West African context. The lyrics of first song, ‘Come and take your place’ were found on a Facebook page called Prayer Fire Fans from Digital Ministries. The website is associated with Faith Revival Church Christ, which appears to be an RCCG church. I sent a message to the group to ascertain if anyone know the songwriter but did not receive a response. The lyrics for the second song, ‘I praise you’ were posted in a chat room in www.nairaland.com under the heading Nigerian Church Praise and Worship Songs Here, posted by oge4Real. The site (<http://www.nairaland.com/886971/nigerian-church-praise-worship-songs#10336477>) asks visitors to post songs that are sung in their churches in order to build a library of songs which will be ‘pleasing to God’. I was unable to find the lyrics for the third song on

any google searches. The words were not displayed for these two songs. There appeared to be an assumption that the congregation would know the words. This differed to Chrisma where when on another occasion, an old hymn was sung for which the words were not displayed, and the words tracked. This is an old practice still used in some Caribbean churches where the song leader recites the words for the congregation to sing. Evidence of the church maintaining a link with past cultural practices or a Caribbean 'Blackenizing.'

The third song included in this category was from song writer Sinach who is a well-known Nigerian Praise and Worship leader. She is a member of the Christ Embassy Church led by Pastor Chris. According to her web site, she is 'one of the most anointed international worship leaders of our time' (sinach.org/profile/). She has written over 200 songs and has won several awards. Her track This is Your Season won song of the year in 2008. Seven of her albums including one Christmas album are listed on iTunes indicating her global popularity.

Table 25: Ethnicity of Song Writer

Black: (African Caribbean, West African, African American)	<i>Chrisma</i> 3 – 43%	<i>Anchor</i> 5 – 42%	<i>CFT</i> 3 – 50%	
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My inclusion of Table 25 problematizes the issue of cultural heritage. This table identifies the ethnicity of the song writers, perhaps countering the charge of widespread adoption of a white CCM repertoire. The figures here are more favourable in regard to a Black adoption at 50% for CFT, and just over 40% with the other two churches. However, it is to be noted that the expansion of this category is due to the inclusion of A.A. artists, Hezekiah Walker, William McDowell and Ron Kenoly. This was subtly summed up by one

of my respondents who stated:

“Global in Black Pentecostal churches means America” (Interview: Francis 2016).

Robinson framed it in the following way:

‘...we are more susceptible to celebrating American Black than what our own have created (Interview: Robinson 2016).

Mindful of A.A exceptionalism (Gilroy 1993: 4), this material sometimes known as ‘gospel’ is often included in CCM and references (Edwards 1992, Dixon-Mckenzie 2014) have already been made to the use of this repertoire displacing the ‘old time songs’ of the Caribbean church. Similar to the findings at NWC which I identified as ‘Blackening’ the use of this material may contribute to the notion of a Black aesthetic within a diasporic framework, but it does little to ameliorate the dominance of global media networks.

Hymns

On a par with the use of Caribbean and African material is the usage of hymns. For many of my respondents, hymns appeared to symbolize historic, theological and cultural meanings unrepresented elsewhere. CFT, who had the least adherence to CCM, had the highest percentage use of 33% by a big margin. Chrisma followed at 14% and Anchor at 8%. Apostle Williams emphasized the centrality of the use of hymns in his churches. All of the CFT churches globally followed the same liturgy which emphasized the use of hymns. At the start of a service, they read Psalms 24, followed by the singing of the hymn ‘The Earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof’ and each service concluded with the hymn ‘There shall be showers of blessing.’ This is the format that was followed in the service which I attended. According to Apostle Williams:

“Hymns are indispensable...they represent the practical expressions of the scriptures” (Interview: October ’16).

He explained that he had developed his love for hymns as a child chorister in Nigeria. I

was interested to note that on the website hymntime.com, the hymn 'The Earth is the Lord's' was also translated into the Nigerian dialect of Yoruba. This, perhaps an indication of the use of hymns in that domain. Owjobi in describing the repertoire from his former church Sureway International Christian Centre, made a similar point. According to him

'hymns are very powerful in the African diaspora'. (Interview 2016)

He stated that many of the songs sung in his homeland of Nigeria were Euro American hymns and contemporary worship songs, emphasizing the use of western music in this colonial territory.

Pastor Claion (Interview 2016) also talked about the importance of hymns. In the service that I attended, hymns only constituted 14% and there was a greater emphasis on the use of popular songs. However, he outlined his own personal preference for hymns which had weightier theological content and gave people an opportunity to concentrate on the words. He further explained that the high usage of contemporary worship songs was necessary in the Sunday morning service which needed to be at a faster pace. Describing the Praise and Worship material as 'snacking' he pointed out that those were not used in the Monday morning prayer and fasting meeting where hymns formed the staple diet. He felt that the more serious detailed reflection needed in the early morning meeting could only be facilitated by the singing of theologically detailed hymns. The opposition that Pastor Claion identified between heavy weight hymns, and the lighter snacks of Praise and Worship is one that is referred to frequently in the literature, characterized by the conflict of the worship wars.

Many of my respondents mentioned the hymn book 'Sacred Songs and Solos' published in 1921 by Ira Sankey. This appeared to be the core text that was used by many evangelical churches in Africa and the Caribbean during the colonial era and has continued to be used by many congregations today.

It is perhaps unsurprising that my respondents were sensitive to the appeal of hymn singing when explored through the lens of missionary activity in the colonies. King (2008) describes Euro American hymn singing as the foundational core of church worship in missionary environments in Sub-Saharan Africa. In some cases, it undermined the use of indigenous music. Furthermore, the physical text of the hymn book was a primary source of scriptural instruction viewed as second only to the Bible. It is almost certainly the case that my respondents did not attach any hegemonic references to the use of hymns but viewed these songs as core to their early and continued Christian development. This colonial legacy observed in all of the churches is something previously highlighted by scholars. Beckford (1998) refers to the 'colonial mentality' contained in many songs sung in BMCs and the empirical findings from my research confirm this assertion. While Euro American hymns do not form the major part of the discourse, they are nonetheless a significant element insofar as they carry the weight of a historical legacy not critiqued by its users. This discussion also underlines the dialectic that the musical discourse throws into relief. The religious and spiritual significance that these hymns have, is not undermined by perceived colonial overtones that participants may or may not be aware of.

I have presented the findings from the research and analysed the songs in regard to genre specifications. This task was useful, insofar as it provided an empirical framework from which I could engage with further analysis. In the next section I will attempt to explore the wider framework within which congregational music lies.

Accessibility

It was clear from my interviews that a notion of accessibility was a key feature of the

material represented by CCM. That was an accessibility both in terms of the content of the material and the channels by which it was made available. A virtuous circle emerged whereby many of the CCM songs written in an easy and simple format were the ones recorded and available via media networks: these were the songs that were marketed and distributed by record companies; they were promoted at the big worship events and festivals; sung at global conventions and crusades and presented in a particular mode of social organisation as discussed above. Additionally, they were played on the Christian radio stations and available for purchase or download. Worship leaders plug into these networks and select these songs for singing, thereby accessing the material for rehearsal via the Song Select (CCLI) website. The songs are performed on a weekly basis. These returns are reported to CCLI, the songwriters receive their appropriate royalties and consequently, many work full time in this role, thereby free to continue the cycle. Hence these songs are accessible because they are the songs that are recorded, distributed and circulated, they are easy to sing and therefore become the songs that congregations want to engage with. This was backed up by my respondents who used the word 'easy' or 'simple' repeatedly to describe this process:

"So, when you have a song format that is easy to digest, easy to construct, easy to perform and easy for a congregation to pick up on and run with, without much need for engagement...a Don Moen, Matt Redman and a Tim Hughes type of song, it's easier, it's more comfortable to engage with that" (Interview: Owojobi 2016).

My respondent here was talking about the musical elements of the song. This was a feature discussed in one of my previous chapters, where I conducted a musicological analysis of some of the material sung at NWC. In that chapter I discussed the simple melodies and simple words found in the songs. I argued that the use of the simple melodies and words engendered notions of imagined community. Another of my respondents in discussing one of the big worship events that was instrumental in engendering the shift in worship styles referred to earlier, also reflected on the

accessibility of the musical material:

“... Mission to London introduced me to a new style of worship as it were. But I didn't know that that style of worship was going to become the main style of worship, that it was going to become the dominant way in which we worship in church, which is a lot simpler chords, a lot simpler chord structures. The thing about it is, that a lot of the way that people are writing is probably on guitar – and it was just quite simple. It was songs that they could literally lead worship by themselves on a guitar, and it just be very simple and easy to play, and then when you put that with a band, you get that fuller sound. But I definitely noticed that change from what it was before the age of 15 and what it became gradually after the age of 15...” (Julien Brown Interview 2012)

Another respondent was concise and definitive in his analysis.

“CCM artists are more pleasing and more easy⁷² to sing and listen to” (Interview Dave P 2016).

Dave P drawing on his experience as a DJ, was reflecting on the components in the music both as an active and a passive participant invoking the role of the media industry. Pastor Claion confirmed this. Despite his luke-warm embracing of CCM, he felt that it necessary to engage with this material as congregants came with an expectation that they were going to sing what they heard on the radio. This was also a point that emerged in my case study on NWC where the dominant musical discourse was one that cohered with the recorded sector.

The virtuous cycle, I referred to above imposes a conformity, whereby according to Owojobi:

“So, when I want to write a song unconsciously I'm trying to write a Matt Redman song because somewhere deep in my psyche that's the gold standard” (Interview: Owojobi 2016).

Owojobi here recognises the seductive danger brought about by popularity. That which is

⁷² Owojobi (Interview, October 2016) further contrasted this with a different type of African church which engaged in material that is not 'easy', perhaps and required a more active mode of participation. Moir (Interview 2014) engaged in a similar type of sentiment in saying that Black music was more difficult to play, having more chords and therefore was inaccessible to white churches.

deemed popular by virtue of its internal and external manifestations and is concomitantly rewarded by financial benefits quickly becomes established as the only musical discourse.

Fletcher expressed it as follows:

“...there is a sense in which people are feeling they’re having to conform to a particular way. It brings about a sense of sameness. If it’s not like this, is not the real deal. That’s not really helpful. People are losing themselves” (Interview: Fletcher 2016).

She goes on to say:

“But the problem with that is that conformity doesn’t give room for the Black worship songwriters who are in the African Caribbean churches and even if they’re singing some of the writers’ songs in the churches, they don’t have the outlets for those songs to spread. Whereas with these other artists, there are actually systems” (Interview: Fletcher 2016).

This is a key point that has been expressed by Fletcher in a similar way to Owojobi, she identifies a system that is made up of the key ingredients that have been developed in this chapter, and as such it is a musical discourse like other discourses, which affirms some elements and silences others. The system that is affirming to which she refers is the CCLI system.

CCLI

As noted before, the way that CCLI works is that songwriters register their material, churches purchase a license, they report the songs that are sung, and then CCLI pays the royalties to the song writers. In my interviews with the industry professionals, it was clear that the opinions regarding CCLI were mixed. The system was not working for BMC songwriters or BMC churches on three accounts. Firstly, many Black songwriters were not registering their material because they were unaware of the regulations; secondly, BMCs who were aware of the regulations were refusing to register and finally, even the

churches that were registered were not reporting properly. (Interviews, Johnson 2011, Moir 2014, Lee 2016, Owojobi 2016).

The need for licensing, as previously noted within a Christian worship setting is not without controversy. Licensing songs as a perquisite in worship settings coincided with the growth in contemporary worship music Smith (2008). Prior to this, churches used hymnals where all copyright costs and permissions were covered in the purchase of the book. The subsequent decline of the hymnal and the advent of the overhead projector and latterly data projectors, marked the beginning of the new modern service. Many churches were unaware of copyright obligations and found themselves unwittingly, in contravention of the law (Weissman 2010, Ward 2005).

Ward reported in 2005 that 90% of Pentecostal churches⁷³ did not have licenses. Williams, Customer Relations Manager for CCLI cited the figure as 80% (Interview: Williams 2016). So, although reduced, one of the highest figures of all the denominations. A feature article⁷⁴ written in Keep the Faith magazine (a publication targeted at BMCs) in 2016, eleven years after Ward's publication acknowledged that this situation was an area of concern to CCLI. This was further confirmed by a collection of Youtube video, hosted on their site including representations from the Black gospel music scene such as Nicky Brown,⁷⁵ Denis Wade⁷⁶ and Noel Robinson⁷⁷ encouraging BMC churches to register. Additionally, one of my respondents who was a member of the same working party drawn together to encourage BMCs to register. He emphatically stated that many of the BMCs: "steadfastly refused to register" (Interview: Lee 2016).

⁷³ A breakdown between white and Black Pentecostal churches was not provided

⁷⁴ 'Why Copyright Matters,' Keep the Faith, Issue 98 Sept 12, 2016

⁷⁵ See Appendix

⁷⁶ Denis Wade is Senior Minister at Micah Ministries and former member of UK gospel group The Wades

⁷⁷ See Appendix

While he was clear that his own Seventh Day Adventist Church were happy to purchase a global license costing in the region of £30,000 for the churches in the Southern Conference because as stated in the scriptures, it was important to “render to Caesar, what is Caesar’s” (Interview: Lee 2016), a similar view shared by Francis who viewed the license as an ‘asset’, explaining

“... it licenses, it structures, and it creates opportunities for artists to be remunerated. It teaches the church that they can’t just carry on and use people’s property as they feel and that you know, there’s laws that governs these things, and there’s practises that go into these things and they ought to work in particular ways that is an adherence to laws’ (Interview 2016).

This however, was not the majority view from the Black industry professionals. Lee observed from his involvement with the working party that many of the Pentecostal BMCs saw a direct conflict between the commercial aspects and the work of the Holy Spirit.

Awojobi expressed what is viewed as the outrage felt by many BMCs:

“...We sing these songs to glorify God, you wrote this song to glorify God, you gave this song over to the body to move closer to God and you’re effectively charging me for it!” (Awojobi 2016)

Nicky Brown, as one of the most successful UK BMC songwriters, musician and beneficiary of the system was also highly critical of it. He was also of the view, that churches should not ‘pay’ for worship, but also felt that the system disadvantaged BMC worship. He pointed out that the improvisatory nature of much BMC worship mitigated against the reporting system. (Interview: Brown 2017). Williams the representative from CCLI also acknowledged that the working party had not been a success and identified a ‘lack of trust’, because churches did not believe that the money was going to Black artists (Interview: Williams 2016).

Analysis of the CCLI

At this stage, it is useful to explore some of the key ingredients that contribute to the

wider discourse of the CCLI. This will be done by analysing the geographic location of the top 25 songs being used by UK churches in October 2016 as shown in Table 26.

Table 26: Analysis of CCLI

1.	10,000 Reasons	Matt Redman	UK
2.	In Christ Alone	Stuart Townsend	UK
3.	How Great is our God	Chris Tomlin	UK
4.	Here Am I to Worship	Tim Hughes	UK
5.	Cornerstone	Hillsong	Australia
6.	How Deep is the Father's Love for Us	Stuart Townsend	UK
7.	Be Still	Dave Evans	UK
8.	Hosanna	Paul Balouche	US
9.	Shout to the Lord	Darlene Zschech	Australia
10.	How Great Thou Art (19 th Century Hymn)	Stuart Wesley Keen Hine	UK
11.	Blessed be Your Name	Matt Redman	UK
12.	King of Kings Majesty	Jarrood Cooper	UK
13.	Everlasting God	Brenton Brown	South Africa
14.	Mighty to Save	Hillsong	Australia
15.	Psalms 23	Stuart Townsend	UK
16.	This is Amazing Grace	Jeremy Riddle	U.S (Bethel)
17.	The Servant King	Graham Kendrick	UK
18.	Amazing Grace (My Chains have Gone)	Chris Tomlin	US
19.	Forever	Chris Tomlin	US
20.	Faithful One	Brian Doerksen	Canada
21.	Our God	Chris Tomlin	US
22.	Come Now it the Time to Worship	Brian Doerksen	Canada
23.	There is a Redeemer	Melody Green	UK

24.	Great is thy Faithfulness (20 th Century Hymn)	Thomas Obediah Chisholm	US
25.	I will offer up my life	Matt Redman	UK

<http://churches.uk.ccli.com/resources/top25>

In percentage breakdown, the countries represented are as follows:

UK 48%

U.S 28%

Australia 12%

Canada 8%

South Africa 4%

Described as a 'shared music library' (Hartje 2009: 369) the percentage breakdown shows 48% of the recording artists in the Top 25 are from the UK. Given the genesis of contemporary worship music in the States, the domination of British artists is surprising and the 20% difference between Britain and the US is considerable. Cummins (2012) was one of the first to use the term 'British invasion' in a journalistic piece. Ingalls (2013) followed this up in her academic research (referred to in Chapter Two) demonstrating how British worship music has had a huge impact on the US worship industry. The outcome of which was to prioritize the marketing and promotion of UK songwriters resulting in a greater demand amongst the US market. Given the size and the success of worship music in the US, this move jettisoned some of the popular UK artists in the mainstream of this global industry (Ingalls 2013).

Given that some of the greatest divisions in American society are racial. One can only surmise that as the US executives looked across the pond, they were unaware or uninterested in similar divisions in UK society. It is also worth noting that neither Ingalls (2013) or Cummins (2012) point out that none of the British representation are from BMCs. A similar point was noted by one of my respondents who preferred to remain

anonymous for this comment, but was specific in naming names and identifying a racial element to contemporary worship music

“.... Delirious, Matt Redman, Tim Hughes, ahm definitely... we used to call it White wash – which was short for white worship” (Interview: anonymous).

My respondent laughed as this comment was relayed, suggesting perhaps that it was a bit of a joke or embarrassed that a political dimension should be brought to bear on this sacred arena. However, the sentiment in the comment is borne out by the data represented in the Top 25 chart which indicates an applauding lack of diversity both from a racial and gender point of view. The racial aspect also was identified a few years ago by Black worship leader Noel Robinson who said in an article entitled: Does Worship have a Race Problem?

‘And so, for many years the Christian Church and worship industry has not embraced many of the Black worship leaders that have come from the Black Church experience, whether African or Caribbean. Instead the Church and worship industry seem to have perpetuated the division’ (Borlase, nd36).

Robinson is mirroring the marginalization of Black cultural products from BMCs. However, he points out the difficulty is twofold. On the one hand, there is systemic challenge of the CCLI system, and the inequalities that appear to be embedded for a variety of reasons, on the other hand there appears to be lack of agency on the part of BMCs. Churches are independent entities capable of conscious choices in regard to their adoption of cultural products. All of the churches cited in the research had committed considerable resources to their music ministries, however, seemed less interested in critiquing the standardised model. Marcia Dixon as religious correspondent for The Voice newspaper has been writing about issues affecting BMCs for the last 20 years. Her perspective is instructive. She identified that she found it *‘disconcerting’* when attending an African church that did not sing African music. She elucidates

“...if you’ve got an all-Black congregation, somehow you fail. Because as Black people, we sometimes feel we need validation by either having a White person...”

(Interview: Dixon 2014)

Dixon recognised the homogenisation taking place in BMCs and framed this direction as a racial construct.

'Everyone wants to do white don't they.... (Interview 2014)

Sometimes, I think in terms of the way that Black churches are going, how they're moving, they feel...somehow, they've got it in their head that if they sound too authentic, people won't be able to buy into them and I think that's very dangerous. (Interview 2014)

Dixon identified a reluctance in the BMCs to embrace a racial identity in their music. Such a stance was viewed as overtly political and therefore anti-Christian. She goes further in relating this to historical imperialist relationship which has impacted both colonised and coloniser in their dealing with one another.

'You know, we were either formally enslaved or we were colonised and that has impacted how we relate to White people and how they view us. As much as you know, we're all the same in the Kingdom of God. You know, there is an element of racism that still exists, and I believe – but I'm being very general – yeah, there's an element of racism that exists and I think that impacts in terms of the exchange of cultures and stuff like that. Black people, we're always accepting of White culture. Do you understand what I mean? And I think that's partly because of our historical relationship with White people. But whereas with White people, their relationship with us has been as one of kind of an oppressor. I know that slavery and all that's been abolished and discrimination, but I think that there's residues there and there is an element of superiority.' (Ibid)

Dixon here was very explicit about what she sees as a level of racism that exists in churches. Relating to an enslaved past and a colonial heritage, she suggests that there is a normative assumption and benign acceptance of a type of cultural domination, which is rationalised on the basis of attracting the indigenous populations.

'When we start negating it because we feel it's going to bring people in, I just think we're

denying a part of ourselves.' (Interview: Dixon 2014)

This lack of racial diversity, identified in the chapter on NWC, is not only local to this congregation but is represented across the churches focused on in this chapter and is represented within the mainstream Christian music industry, raising questions about what we mean by African and Caribbean Pentecostalism if this most significant feature of worship engagement is not represented in the musical discourse of these churches.

Robinson summed it up in a rather bleak manner:

'...despite the amazing legacy of the Black church....it doesn't have a song.
(Interview: Robinson 2016)

Conclusion

The material in this chapter comprises of data collected from three BMC churches in Woolwich. The purpose of this exercise was to ascertain whether the findings from NWC were consistent elsewhere. Using a multimodal analysis, I give a partial description of the buildings and present key points from the sermons in order to ensure that the sounds are heard within the context of a building and embedded in a theological context. The results, with slight variations in different categories, largely cohere with the findings at NWC. They demonstrate a changing repertoire over a period of time with an emphasis on a standardised form of worship with material drawn from the global Christian industry. There is evidence of material which reflects the ethnicities of the churches, but this is in the minority. Although opinions from music industry experts were mixed it appeared that the mechanism set up to administer the song writing processes was viewed as problematic. Furthermore, this system was not reflective of BMCs. Overall, the findings confirmed that the musical discourse, while celebratory of a religious identity because churches were keen to be seen as inclusive, was at the expense of embracing congregation songs reflective of an African or Caribbean background, i.e. a racial identity.

In the following chapter, I will summarise the key findings of the study and identify areas for further research.

CHAPTER NINE

CONCLUSION - REMEMBER AFRICA

This study has set out to explore the musical discourse of BMCs in Woolwich in the London Borough of Greenwich. This is contextualized against a background of the growth of Pentecostalism and a steady rise in migration from Africa to the UK. I have demonstrated that while it is accepted almost without question in the literature that up-tempo energetic sounds constitute and construct Pentecostalism with aural and oral components as fundamental components of its performativity, there is a paucity of analytical in-depth research on congregational music in these settings. Therefore, building on previous literature relating to BMCs, African Pentecostalism and Pentecostal studies, Nattiez's (1990) model of musical discourse has been adapted to interrogate the total musical fact and to structure the analysis. Also, in response to previous visual studies in Pentecostalism, that were inattentive to this most fundamental characteristic, I have appropriated a multimodal analysis as a means of documenting and deconstructing the data. This semiotic approach enables a thorough analysis of congregational music located in a historical, social, religious, cultural and physical context. Overall, the study has addressed a gap that currently exists in the literature relating to UK BMCs on congregational music. This work complements and extends in a more systematic and critical fashion previous generalised analysis highlighting the centrality of music to BMC Pentecostal environments. These studies failed to relate the cultural products to a globalised music industry. Furthermore, this study has generated insights into exclusions, silences and ambiguities within the music framework which simultaneously mitigate, relieve and problematise the local/global paradigm often associated with Pentecostalism. In this chapter, I will point out how the objectives have been addressed, comment on the significance of the findings, and consider the implications for further research.

Methodological Contributions to the Field

The first objective of the thesis was to establish orality and aurality as fundamental components of Pentecostalism. In Chapter Two I point out where references to speaking and hearing are identified in literature on Pentecostalism and UK BMCs but argue that there is little systematic analysis in this work. In order to address this gap, my second and third objectives were to bring two new methodological approaches to studies on UK BMCs and Pentecostal scholarship. Firstly, the use of Nattiez's model of musical discourse within a framework of CDA. This has enabled an interrogation of the musical product from three different vantage points exploring issues of power, dominance, silence and ambiguities. Using this polysemic approach has avoided a reductionist analysis and revealed that the music discourse is capable of transmitting multiple meanings. The isolation of merely one element may not reveal insights available in the other two, hence leading to a partial understanding. It is important therefore to interrogate the three domains of the discourse, i.e. the music, the receivers and the producers in order to understand the music's cultural power, the work that it does in religious settings and the possible economic ramifications. This was undertaken in the following manner. In Chapter Four using an ethnographic product, I explored the esthetic parameter and found that Praise and Worship fulfilled its role as Pentecostal liturgy and was a pleasurable and cathartic activity with which to be engaged. The second element of the esthetic parameter characterized the music as modern congregational repertoire as evidenced by the songs' position in the CCLI database. The immanent parameter, that is the musicological analysis, confirmed material in the literature identifying Praise and Worship music consisting of easy, happy tunes in the major key conveying simplicity and pleasure and little engagement with issues of social justice or disappointment and pain. These ideas further supporting the wealth and health mantra. This element was superimposed by an African American 'Blackening' communicated through the rhythm, harmony and musical troupes. Further exploration of the poietic from the Praise and Worship team

unpacked the history of music in the church, identifying a deliberate policy to adopt a global repertoire and therefore silence a West African voice, showing an acceptability of the African American voice, but the non-acceptability of the African voice which coincided with aspirations of becoming a mega church. However, the research also showed that this voice had not been permanently silenced, and there were other spaces where it leaked out. Examining any one of these aspects would be fruitful but exploring the musical discourse in the round enlists a detailed interpretation of the complexities and contradictions. The adoption of this model will assist Pentecostal scholars in conducting a sociological analysis on the musical output of these settings whilst holding in tension the work that it does as worship music.

The second addition to the field is that of multimodal analysis. This method recognises that communication is multimodal, and meaning is created using a range of semiotic resources. I pointed out that previous studies (Meyer 2004, Asamoah-Gyadu in Clark 2007, Hackett in Mitchell and Marriage 2003, de Witte in Meyer 2009) exploring Pentecostalism had done so solely through the perspective of the visual leading to an incomplete analysis given the focus on the aural and oral in these settings. Furthermore, we hear in a physical context and what we see, i.e. the visual, often determines the meanings brought to what is heard. It was necessary to explore the impact of prosperity gospel and analyse this through the lens of the semiotic arrangements due to its prominence in NWC's presentation of self. The research found that the semiotic codes, explored in Chapter Five and Eight embedded in visual and architectural elements alongside the analysis of the musical and oral information chimed with the ideals of the good life establishing links with a prosperity gospel. Hence the visual and theological contexts were critical in understanding the meaning-making processes contained within the musical discourse. Multimodal analysis is also a useful tool for Pentecostal scholars as it will allow them to consider and interrogate relationships between the physical fabric

alongside the aural and oral entities.

Limitations of the Research

However, there were limitations to the research insofar as the methodological approach was not applied consistently across the churches identified. The reasons for this were twofold. At the outset, my intention was to engage in a single case study exercise. However, as the findings from NWC unfolded it became important to establish whether these results were consistent in other BMC churches in the area. Due to constraints of time and resources, the detail given to the visual and musicological analysis could not be carried out to the same degree as at NWC. I decided therefore to conduct a minimal analysis of the visual aspects, and to isolate the esthetic component from the point of view of the external verification i.e. the CCLI chart, as this was one of the most important elements to emerge from the research at NWC.

Another limitation pertained to the second objective which included an analysis of the musicological materials. I decided to limit the musicological discussion to the areas of melody, rhythm, harmony and lyrics. Inclusion of timbre, phrasing and dynamics, as well as a more detailed account of the rhythm could have shed light on a more complex analysis of the musical discourse. However, due to constraints of time and in an effort to ensure that the thesis remained accessible to a wide range of readers, I limited the analysis to the aforementioned areas. Furthermore, the scope of the project did not allow me to extend the detailed musicological analysis used in Chapter Six to be utilised in Chapter Eight. The musicological analysis identified simple memorable tunes using the major key, an avoidance of socio political issues, and the use of vibrant upbeat rhythms. Given the similarity in repertoire, one could safely assume that these musical features would be the same across all four churches. Indeed, as identified by Walser and Woods

(2007), Liesch (2007) and Evans (2006) these elements are characteristic of contemporary worship music.

Despite these limitations, the multimodal analysis which was applied across all four churches established the similarities and differences. The use of colour, style and aesthetic values denote professionalism, order and strong managerial control. NWC registered high on the barometer of hard prosperity; CFT and Anchor, on the other hand, although they denied an adherence to the controversial teaching, registered at different levels. Chrisma, the older Caribbean church did not register at all on the barometer. Despite these differences in the scope, theology and visual semiotics, they all held in common a commitment to and the development of high quality music. The most significant finding addressed the fifth objective regarding the influence of commercial music in BMC settings. The research found that in all cases the majority of the music came from the globalized Christian music sector. The significance of this will be discussed in the following section.

Significance of the Findings

There are two key areas of importance in regard to the findings. Firstly, the research found that all of the churches included in the study carried a burden of signification. By this I mean that, the centrality of ecstatic, high octane sounds embedded in Pentecostalism aligned with the expectation drawn from media representations and actual practices, determines that churches are required to deliver 'good music'. This expectation exists for large and small churches alike, and although all churches in the study committed a good time of time and resource to their musical product, I would contend that the expectation was greater for the mega churches, NWC and CFT who communicate via their external and internal signs the ideology of the good life ensconced in a prosperity gospel. It is therefore important that the sound of the church and

adherence to the global standard repertoire matches the visual imaging in order to retain their hegemony in the religious marketplace.

NWC and CFT, the two mega churches in the study although very different, confirm the diversity that exist within BMCs, but also demonstrate conformity and homogeneity in different ways. CFT with the highest level of hymns, and the lowest level of CCM, and NWC with the highest level of Hillsong and CCM combined and the lowest level of hymns. This suggests, in the case of CFT a conformity to traditionalism, and in the case of NWC a conformity to modernity. They both however, hold in common an adherence to the global Christian music industry and as a consequence a non-adherence to cultural products that reflect the ethnicities of these congregation. While, Anchor and Chrisma were part of larger denominations with expansionist aspirations, their buildings limit the aspirations of the mega and greater variety was observed in regard to their musical output, showing some evidence of a musical cultural identity reflective of their congregations. The larger churches, therefore carrying the weight of this burden of signification by committing greater amounts of time, energy and resource to the self-preservation of the entity and as such have less scope for innovation and diversity.

The second area of significance relates to the sixth objective which was to understand how concepts of the local and global are reinforced and contested in congregational singing. I pointed out that some scholars (Adogame 2002, 2013: x, Robert 2000:56) had attributed the success of Pentecostalism due to its ability to successfully negotiate the global and the local. This analysis allows us to problematize the notions of local and global through the lens of congregational singing. All of the churches in the sample can be viewed as global enterprises with branches in other geographical domains. They all owned their own buildings, exhibiting differing amounts of capital acquisition and commitment to a geographical locality. To varying degrees, all of the churches were the

savvy, sophisticated and technologically adept entities referred to in Chapter Two.

Accepting that terms such as local and global contain a good deal of spillage in the technological and globalized village in which we all reside, the objective raises the question as to how might we view the local in terms of their musical discourse? Evans (2006) engages with the notion of local and global in an uncritical manner, arguing that there is a disappearance of the 'local' in congregational song. While on the surface, this may appear to be the case in this research. It could be argued that adherence to CCM is a demonstration of BMCs rightfully adopting a repertoire that is 'local' to their immediate context in an attempt to attract and recruit a 'local' population as represented by Alfie in Chapter Five. African churches pride themselves on engaging in reverse mission and are committed to being accessible to the 'local' populations. Indeed, they should be applauded for their desire to missionize their neighbours and trying to ensure an accessibility unlike the experience faced by many Africans and Caribbeans on arrival in the UK.

Furthermore, the significance of hymns, as a highly revered musical discourse in the colonial locations of the pastors, could also be viewed as a sign of the 'local'. Back (1998) is helpful here in pointing out that colonial legacies are embedded in local narratives, and the two poles should not be viewed as dichotomous, but rather as on a continuum. The use of hymns in this context then becomes the 'local' insofar as they are remnants of the pastors' colonial education where use of 'local' indigenous songs were discouraged and hymns were used as a means of cultural domination by European missionaries (King 2008). This arguably referencing the link between empire and colonialism as stated by Reddie 2014:1 'the unacknowledged elephant in the room.' Reddie (2014:1) This raises the question of whose locality are we referring to and how we understand local and global

in this context? While the industry may be global in regard to its reach and accessibility, this so-called 'global' industry is one which is not reflective of its users in UK BMCs. Unlike the local scene of the Black British gospel industry that I refer to in the introduction which was emphatically bound up with musical ingredients of BMCs, the local here is one which is unequivocally bound up with the global. This differs from the local referred to by Pentecostal scholars which is one where indigenous cultural products are seen, recognised and heard.

Of course, there are difficulties regarding the licensing arrangements, and how BMCs engage with this structure. Nonetheless, in addressing my fourth objective, it appears that in regard to cultural production, African Pentecostalism specifically, and BMCs generally in Woolwich, display minimal signs of 'Africanness' in regard to their musical discourse. Mindful of charges of essentialism, a critical discourse analysis raises questions about the control of the narrative pertaining to the performance of identity and the acquisition of economic power and influence. I acknowledge that musical styles do not reside in fixed bounded categories and are ever evolving. And I also appreciate that within congregations that are different preferences between ethnicities and generations, and churches labelled as BMC contain a multiplicity of diversity. Nonetheless, the research was unequivocal in its findings that members of BMCs do not control the production, i.e. in terms of the original artistic creation, circulation or distribution. Although there are some tampering around the edges to Blackenise the sound to ensure an adherence to a black musical aesthetic, they are not the economic beneficiaries of the cultural production of Christian music in the UK.

Scholars have established a causal relationship between music and a socio-religious identity.

'Music often services a central role in processes of identification within religious

communities because collective music making allows for the negotiation of religious identities in dialogues with those of race/ethnicity, national and regional affiliations, general difference and denominational or parachurch affiliations' (Ingalls 2013: 6).

This establishes the unique socio-religious, political and aesthetic connections forged by participation in congregational singing. While Ingalls (2008) cautions against simply unreflexively mapping a religious identity onto ethnic identity as a fixed immovable entity in opposition to often hostile forces of secular modernity, I contend that a situation where churches are simply reflecting a standardized and globalized model of worship is problematic. Music has enormous potential for building community, erecting boundaries and constructing identities. Imitating a globalized model disallows the potential to express local concerns and celebrations. While adoption of this repertoire places a community within the broader globalised framework, it presents an apolitical identity denuded of the possibility and desirability of difference. Reddie argues that there is an 'anti-Black problematic of Christianity in Britain' (Reddie 2014: 1), This stance assumes a homogenous definition of 'Black' I would argue for a more differentiated approach. My research found that there was an anti-African and anti-Caribbean problematic within the musical discourse. Despite the many border crossing dynamics outlined in the introduction in the Black British gospel industry, and the syncretism in the approach taken by early BMCs referred to Chapter Two, there appears to be little in the way of a legacy from this period in regard to congregational music. While there are other sounds behind closed doors, both inside and outside the church, the adherence to the African American model that the scene was attempting to counter back in the eighties, still appears to be dominant.

Despite many strides that have been made in the UK, race is still a major challenge. BMCs are in a unique position to demonstrate strength, resilience and artistic brilliance should they chose not to deny their own identity, heritage and cultural product. Some

churches have extensive resources which have been deployed in a number of ways including the maintenance of high quality music within their congregation. However, there was little evidence of a desire to diversify this output. The 'sounds mega' referred to in the title of this study refer to those sounds that have dominated contemporary worship in the UK impacting on all churches regardless of size, ethnicity and denomination. Unfortunately, these sounds are embedded in a colonialist and imperialist framework which would benefit from the power and beauty of diversity.

Further Research

BMCs are diverse, existing across different denominations, representing numerous ethnicities and emphasising distinct theologies. Further research should identify whether the findings in the thesis are replicated across BMCs in the UK and whether there are regional and denominational differences. I am aware, for example, of a number of African Francophone churches, it would be useful to ascertain the impact if any, of the global Christian music industry on these churches. Furthermore, there are also a growing number of multicultural churches in mainstream denominations particularly in the metropolitan areas. A comparative study between BMCs and white led churches could identify whether the diversity that exists in congregations also exists in the musical output. BMCs are in a unique position of speaking to and for the global citizen. Cognizance of the various forces and influences that have shaped development in this post colonist and post industrialist age, these churches can create new songs for white and Black churches in the diaspora with all of its pluralities. The musical discourse contained is a critical affirmation of combining and coalescing a religious and racial identity that celebrate the diversity of Blackness that reside in the BMC if they have the courage in the words of Muyiwa, Nigerian Praise and Worship leader 'to remember Africa.'⁷⁸

⁷⁸ Muyiwa Olarewaju is a popular Praise and Worship leader, recording artist and DJ for Premier Gospel

Radio. His music is an eclectic mix of African styles and gospel. His African identity is a core theme demonstrated both visually and sonically in his recordings and performances.

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APPENDIX

Respondents for study and dates of Interviews

Group 1: Members of the Praise and Worship Team at NWC

Lawrence Johnson (Minister for Music)	9 th December 2011
Glenn Gwazai	3 rd October 2012
Elaine Reid	13 th October 2013
Alfred Eferakorho	10 th November 2013
Koby Boakye	19 th August 2014
Orakle Obarotimi	21 st August 2014

Group 2: Pastors/leaders of church's where the second phase of fieldwork took place

Pastor Claion Grandison – Chrisma, New Testament Church of God (NTCG), Woolwich.
19th September 2016

Leader A⁷⁹ – Redeemed Christian Church of God, (RCCG), Woolwich. (Email Interview)

Apostle Alfred Williams – Christ Faith Tabernacle (CFT), Woolwich. 11th October 2016

Group 3: Music Industry Experts

Julien Brown – Session musician with 30 years professional experience in secular, gospel and BMCs settings. 19th July 2012

Marcia Dixon – Founder of MD PR company supporting BMCs, Black gospel musicians, former journalist for the Voice newspaper and founder and editor for Keep the Faith Magazine. 20th November 2014

Nicky Brown - Producer, Composer, Musician with 35 years' professional experience in

⁷⁹ This member of the Senior Leadership team preferred to remain anonymous.

secular gospel BMC setting, also Head of Music at Ruach City Church.⁸⁰ 11th January 2017

Juliet Fletcher – Former researcher BBC gospel programmes and former director and current chair Gospel Music Industry Association. 8th October 2016

Roy Francis - Former producer of Channel 4's People Get Ready and BBC Songs of Praise. Founder Roy Francis Productions: Gospel Artist Development Agency. 19th November 2016

Paul Lee – Former Director of Music - Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) Church, South Region and CCLI working party. 4th October 2016

Les Moir – Artistic Director, Integrity Music. 11th December 2016

Yinka Owojobi - Founder UK gospel.com, DJ Premier Gospel. 5th October 2016

Dave P – Former DJ for Choice and Premier gospel, founder of UGN Jams, internet gospel radio station. 7th October 2016

Noel Robinson⁸¹ - Gospel Musician/Worship Leader currently signed to Integrity Music. 7th December 2016

Chris Williams - Head of Customer Relations, CCLI. 16th November 2016

⁸⁰ Ruach City Church is a large well-established BMC with a number of branches in London led by Bishop John and Penny Francis. Bishop John, along with Lawrence Johnson (Music Minister from NWC) was one of the founder members of the London Community Gospel Choir (LCGC) and played a key role in the Black British gospel industry.

⁸¹ Noel Robinson has released five albums O Taste and See in 1996, Worthy in this Place in 2001, Garment of Praise in 2006, Devoted in 2013 and Outrageous Love in 2015